

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

MEDDLER'S WORLD

by Theodore Cogswell
& Mack Reynolds

FORT IRON

by Margaret St. Clair

ALL STORIES NEW

ANC.
25¢

NOV.



"I'LL RIPPLE YOUR BODY WITH MUSCLES and LOAD T-N-T IN YOUR FISTS"

Says JOE LOUIS, Great World Champion

Broaden your shoulders... put hammer-like force in your hands. Add solid new muscle to your arms.

I wish you could come to Lou Stillman's famous training headquarters with me. See how the Champions build their bodies. Are you fat and flabby? Watch Whitey Lockman of the New York Giants show his sure-fire method to remove fat. Tired, rundown, nervous and unhappy? See Kid Gavilan's tested plan to liven you up. Want a masterful chest? Famous trainer George Patterson has a simple chair trick that adds inches to your chest... **FAST!**

If you want to be a star athlete and look like one... let these famous Champions show you how. It's simple. It's easy. Just 15 minutes a day will make a new MAN out of you. Find out how these sports Stars can help YOU! Send coupon below. Extra! I've arranged to include my book "Fight Secrets" for just 10¢ - so that you'll be sure to write me. Get off the bench - and into the game. Send me the coupon below *right now!*

Sincerely,

Joe Louis

Are You...

- Tired
- Nervous
- Rundown
- Skinny
- Fat and Flabby
- Always being picked on?

Then do exactly as Joe and his champion staff of instructors tell you. For full facts send coupon below.



LET THESE FAMOUS CHAMPIONS POINT YOUR WAY TO ATHLETIC GLORY



WHITEY LOCKMAN explains his sure-fire method to remove fat... stimulate circulation and loosen you up for action... **WITH LITTLE EFFORT.**



BILLY GRAHAM shows you how to develop stamina and warmup for basketball... handball... track... and boxing... **IN LITTLE TIME.**



PAUL GIEL illustrates body coordination secrets used by coaches to condition football players, swimmers, tennis and track men... **FOR QUICK RESULTS.**



YOGI BERRA gives you the rugged Manly Art Test... builds up your confidence... **LOTS OF FUN**



WILLIE PEP gives you his special trimming and reducing method. Builds your abdomen to take a herd smash... energizes your entire midsection... **FAST.**



KID GAVILAN reveals his secrets of split-second timing... increases your resistance to fatigue with his tested training camp workout... **THAT WORKS WONDERS.**

Win new applause and popularity. Add solid inches to your chest. Put smash in your fists... Ripple your back muscles... Win new glory... Easy... At Home... In less than 15 minutes a day!



MAIL COUPON TODAY

JOE LOUIS, c/o NATIONAL SPORTS COUNCIL, DEPT. D-115
33 West 46th Street, New York 36, N. Y.

Dear Joe:

- ☐ Please send me absolutely free a full and complete explanation of how the National Sports Council can build me the right kind of body.
- ☐ Enclosed is 10¢. Please include your famous book **FIGHT SECRETS.**

NAME _____ AGE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

**THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR BY THE NATIONAL SPORTS COUNCIL
33 WEST 46TH STREET, NEW YORK 36, N. Y.**

How to CRACK the education barrier



Is there an "education barrier" between you and promotion? Are young college graduates being brought in to fill positions above you?

You can break down that barrier . . . gain real security, responsibility, prestige . . . *surprise fellow employees and win their respect.* You can match yourself against the smartest of the college boys and come out a WINNER. Here's how!

AN HOUR A DAY THE I. C. S. WAY!

If you can spare an hour a day, if you have the determination to make good, if you're willing to invest pennies now for dollars later on—then I.C.S. can help you. You can be a man or woman, young or old, skilled or unskilled. So long as you

can understand simple language and illustrated training manuals, you need have no doubts. The I.C.S. hour-a-day plan is SUCCESS-PROVED. You learn while you earn—anywhere, any time. And the cost?—*less than a quarter a day!*

Just pick the subject you want!

Only I.C.S. offers you such a wide range of subjects to choose from. Drafting, Engineering, Television, Aeronautics, Business, High School. 891 courses in all. I.C.S. is the oldest, largest home-study school. It is also the best known in business and industry.

Free catalog plus free books!

When you mail the coupon below, you get a complete catalog on the subject you check with information about employment opportunities, training requirements, etc. And you get "How to Succeed"—86 pages of valuable tips on winning recognition, pay raises, success. Also, a free sample lesson in basic mathematics.

For Real Job Security—Get an I. C. S. Diploma! I. C. S., Scranton 9, Penna. Member, National Home Study Council

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

ICS

BOX 62301J, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

(Partial list of 277 courses)

Without cost or obligation, send me "HOW TO SUCCEED" and the opportunity booklet about the field BEFORE which I have marked X (also sample lesson):

ARCHITECTURE and BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

- ☐ Air Conditioning—Ratls.
- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Architectural Interior
- ☐ Building Contractor
- ☐ Building Maintenance
- ☐ Carpenter and Mill Work
- ☐ Estimating
- ☐ Heating
- ☐ Heating Contractor
- ☐ Plumbing
- ☐ Reading Arch. Blueprints

ART

- ☐ Cartooning
- ☐ Commercial Art
- ☐ Fashion Illustrating
- ☐ Magazine Illustrating
- ☐ Show Card and Sign Lettering
- ☐ Sketching and Painting

AUTOMOTIVE

- ☐ Auto Body Rebuilding
- ☐ Auto Elec. Technician
- ☐ Auto-Engine Tune-Up
- ☐ Automobile

AVIATION

- ☐ Astronautical Engineering Jr.
- ☐ Aircraft & Engine Mechanic

BUSINESS

- ☐ Advertising
- ☐ Bookkeeping and Accounting
- ☐ Business Administration
- ☐ Business Correspondence
- ☐ Public Accounting
- ☐ Creative Salesmanship
- ☐ Federal Tax
- ☐ Letter-writing Improvement
- ☐ Office Management
- ☐ Professional Secretary
- ☐ Retail Business Management
- ☐ Sales Management
- ☐ Stenographic-Secretarial
- ☐ Traffic Management

CHEMISTRY

- ☐ Analytical Chemistry
- ☐ Chemical Engineering
- ☐ Chem. Lab. Technician
- ☐ General Chemistry
- ☐ Natural Gas Prod. & Trans.
- ☐ Petroleum Engineering
- ☐ Plastics
- ☐ Pulp and Paper Making

CIVIL, STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING

- ☐ Civil Engineering
- ☐ Construction Engineering
- ☐ Highway Engineering
- ☐ Reading Struct. Blueprints
- ☐ Sanitary Engineering
- ☐ Structural Engineering
- ☐ Surveying and Mapping

DRAFTING

- ☐ Aircraft Drafting
- ☐ Architectural Drafting
- ☐ Electrical Drafting
- ☐ Mechanical Drafting
- ☐ Mine Surveying and Mapping
- ☐ Plumbing Drawing and Estimating

STRUCTURAL DRAFTING

- ☐ Electrical Engineering
- ☐ Electrical Maintenance
- ☐ Electronics
- ☐ Control Engineering
- ☐ Loran

HIGH SCHOOL

- ☐ Commercial
- ☐ Good English
- ☐ High School Subjects
- ☐ Mathematics

LEADERSHIP

- ☐ Foremanship
- ☐ Industrial Supervision
- ☐ Leadership and Organization
- ☐ Personal-Labor Relations

MECHANICAL AND SHOP

- ☐ Gas-Electric Welding
- ☐ Heat Treatment
- ☐ Metalurgy
- ☐ Industrial Engineering
- ☐ Industrial Instrumentation
- ☐ Industrial Supervision
- ☐ Internal Combustion Engines
- ☐ Machine Design-Drafting
- ☐ Machine Shop Inspection
- ☐ Machine Shop Practice
- ☐ Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Quality Control
- ☐ Reading Shop Blueprints
- ☐ Refrigeration
- ☐ Tool Design
- ☐ Toolmaking

RADIO, TELEVISION

- ☐ Industrial Electronics
- ☐ Practical Radio TV Eng'g
- ☐ Radio and TV Servicing
- ☐ Radio Operating

TELEVISION TECHNICIAN

- ☐ Air Brakes
- ☐ Car Inspector
- ☐ Diesel Locomotive
- ☐ Locomotive Engineer
- ☐ Section Foreman

STEAM AND DIESEL POWER

- ☐ Combustion Engineering
- ☐ Diesel—Elec.
- ☐ Diesel Eng's
- ☐ Electric Light and Power
- ☐ Stationary Steam
- ☐ Stationary Steam Engineering

TEXTILE

- ☐ Carding and Spinning
- ☐ Cotton, Rayon, Woolen Mfg.
- ☐ Finishing and Dyeing
- ☐ Loom Fix & Tensioning
- ☐ Textile Eng'g
- ☐ Weaving
- ☐ Winding and Weaving

MISCELLANEOUS

- ☐ Domestic Refrigeration
- ☐ Marine Engineering
- ☐ Ocean Navigation
- ☐ Professional Engineering
- ☐ Short Story Writing
- ☐ Telegraphy

Name _____ Age _____ Home Address _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____ Working Hours _____ A.M. to P.M. _____

Occupation _____

Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools, Connelley, Ltd., Montreal, Canada. . . . Special tuition rates to members of the U. S. Armed Forces.

Science Fiction QUARTERLY

ALL
NEW
STORIES

Volume 4

November, 1955

Number 1

FEATURED NOVEL

- MEDDLER'S WORLD** Theodore Cogswell & Mack Reynolds 6
The present suggests certain possibilities for tomorrow. But what if the past could be changed, bringing an entirely different "present" and "future" into being. A fascinating tale of "If".

NOVELET

- THE REGENERATORS** Charles A. Stearns 46
If the process of atomic dissipation could be reversed, and...

SHORT STORIES

- FORT IRON** Margaret St. Clair 34
A strange tale of the fight against a still stranger enemy...
- NOOGLES HAVE TO EXPLAIN** S. S. Boren 70
Perhaps we should have rejected the explanation, too, but...
- SALVAGE** Lee Priestly 72
No matter what it is, there can be a black market on it.

READERS' DEPARTMENTS

- "ENTERTAINMENT"** (Editorial) Robert W. Lowndes 44
- INSIDE SCIENCE FICTION** Robert A. Madle 66
- INDEX TO VOLUMES ONE AND TWO** 76
- IT SAYS HERE** (Letters and Comment) The Readers 79

ROBERT W. LOWNDES, *Editor*

DOROTHY B. SEADOR *Asso. Ed.*

MILTON LUROS, *Art Director*

MARIE A. PARK, *Asso. Ed.*

Cover by Frank Kelly Freas, suggested by a scene in "Meddler's World"

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY, November, 1955, published February, May, August, and November, by COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS, INC., 1 Appleton Street, Holyoke, Mass. Editorial and executive offices at 541 Church Street, New York 13, New York. Entered at second class matter at the Post Office at Holyoke, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Single copy 25¢; yearly subscription \$1.00. Entire contents copyright 1955 by COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS, INC. Manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed envelopes to insure return if not accepted, and while reasonable care will be extended in handling them, it is understood that they are submitted at author's risk. Printed in U. S. A.

I Will Send You BOTH FREE

J. E. SMITH, President
National Radio Institute
Washington 9, D. C.

**ACTUAL
LESSON**

**The ABC's of
SERVICING**

**How to be a SUCCESS
in
RADIO-TELEVISION**

**64
PAGE
BOOK**

See How Train You at Home in Spare Time for Good Pay Jobs in RADIO-TELEVISION

You Practice Broadcasting with Equipment I Send



As part of my Communications Course I send you kits of parts to build the low-power Broadcasting Transmitter shown at left. You use it to get practical experience putting this station "on the air," to perform procedures required of broadcasting station operators. An FCC Commercial Operator's license can be your ticket to a better job and a bright future. My course gives you the training you need to get your license. Mail coupon below. See in my book other valuable equipment you build and keep.

You Practice Servicing with Equipment I Send



Nothing takes the place of PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE. That's why NRI training is based on LEARNING BY DOING. You see kits of parts I furnish to build many circuits complete to both Radio and Television. With my Servicing Course you build the modern receiver shown at right. You also build an Electronic Multimeter which you can use to help fix sets while training at home. Many students make \$10, \$15 a week extra fixing neighbors' sets in spare time, starting soon after enrolling. I send you special booklets that show you how to fix sets. Mail coupon for 64-page book and actual Servicing Lesson, both FREE.

TRAINING plus OPPORTUNITY is the PERFECT combination. The sample lesson I send will prove to you that it is practical to keep your job while TRAINING right in your own home for better pay and a brighter future. My 64-page book should convince you that Radio-Television is truly today's field of OPPORTUNITY.

TELEVISION MAKING JOBS, PROSPERITY

Radio, even without Television, is bigger than ever. 115 million home and auto Radios create steady demand for service. 3000 Radio stations give interesting, good pay jobs to operators, technicians. NOW ADD TELEVISION. 25 million Television homes and the total growing rapidly. 200 Television stations on the air and hundreds more under construction. Color Television soon to be a reality. Government, Aviation, Police, Ship, Micro-wave Relay, Two-way Communications for buses, taxis, trucks, railroads are growing fields providing good jobs for men who know Radio-Television. All this adds up to good pay now, a bright future later for men who qualify.



START SOON TO MAKE \$10, \$15 A WEEK EXTRA

An important benefit of Radio-Television training is that you can start to cash in fast. Many men I train fix neighbors' sets, make extra money, starting soon after they enroll. Multimeter built with parts I send helps locate and correct set troubles. Read at left how you build actual equipment that gives you practical experience, brings to life what you learn from my lessons.

MEN OF ACTION NEEDED MAIL COUPON TODAY

Act now to enjoy more good things of life. Get the benefit of my 40 years' experience training men at home. Take NRI training for as little as \$5 a month. Many NRI graduates (some with only a grammar school education) make more in two weeks than the total cost of training. Find out about this tested way to better pay. Mail coupon below today for Actual Lesson and 64-page Book—BOTH FREE. J. E. SMITH, President, National Radio Institute, Dept. 83MT, Washington 9, D. C. OUR 40TH YEAR.

I TRAINED THESE MEN AT HOME



"Started repairing Radios six months after enrolling. Earned \$12 to \$15 a week, spare time." —ADAM KRAMLIK, JR., Sumner-ton, Pennsylvania.



"I've come a long way in Radio and Television since graduating. Have my own business on Main Street." —JOE TRAVERS, Asbury Park, New Jersey.



"Manager of meat market when I began. Answered ad for Radio serviceman. Got job. Pay increased 50% in year." —C. CARTER, San Bernardino, California.



"Am with WCOC. NRI course can't be beat. Passed exam for first class Radiophone license with no trouble at all." —JESSE W. PARKER, Meriden, Conn.



"Am with WNYT as video control engineer on ECA color project. Give a lot of my success to your textbooks." —WARREN DOREM, Mahwah, N. J.

**AVAILABLE TO
VETERANS
UNDER GI BILLS**

Good for Both—FREE

Mr. J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 8MT
National Radio Institute, Washington 9, D. C.

Mail the Sample Lesson and 64-page Book, FREE. (No money will call. Please write plainly.)

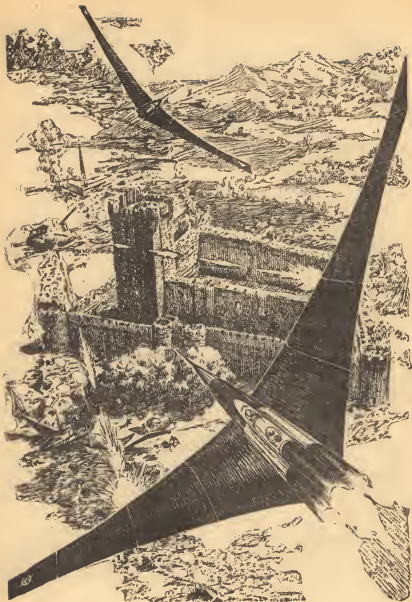
Name..... Age.....

Address.....

City..... Zone..... State.....

VETS write in date of discharge.....





The interceptors were coming in fast, and the only thing in O'Hara's favor was the fact that they traveled too fast to be reliable and accurate on strafe jobs.

They reached into yesterday to change tomorrow — and were gone with a world that never was. And in their place was — a world that might have been!

MEDDLER'S WORLD

Featured Novel of Alternate Destiny —

by THEODORE COGSWELL & MACK REYNOLDS

Illustrated by **FREAS**

PART ONE: Tomorrow

“WHILE IN the Denver salient our forces evacuated Boulder in accordance with the General Staff's plan for a strategic rectification of our lines. Thirty-Seven of the enemy's robot tanks were destroyed while attempting a sortie designed to take advantage of our orderly withdrawal. Losses to our troops were negligible.”

As the speaker set in the ceiling of the underground laboratory went silent, there was a snort of disgust from the lanky, tired-eyed major, in the uniform of the Midwestern Protectorate, who was lounging on the old studio couch that stood against the far wall. The slender girl, who was checking the control board of the complex bank of equipment that occupied the entire other end of the laboratory, ran her fingers absently through her short-

cropped, copper colored hair and turned toward him. “Did you say something?”

“Nope, but did you catch that?”

“What?”

He jerked his thumb toward the speaker.

She shook her head. “It makes noises twenty-four hours a day. I never listen to it. Did something special just come over?”

“Yeah. Our Sunday punch has fanned air. We just got thrown out of Boulder. With the canyon unstopped, the Rocky Mountain Republic will have its tanks in Denver in a week. By the time the General has finished rectifying his lines, we'll be back where we started from six months ago—unless you can come up with the improved antitank homing rocket you promised for production two weeks ago, that is.”

She gave an indifferent shrug. “I've been so busy tinkering with the Monster that I haven't had any time left

for toy making. If things check out the way they should, I may have time to whip up something for him next week. All he needs is an automatic anti-scrambling device that can be used on our present models."

"Listen, baby," said the major grimly, "you keep playing around the way you have been, and you're going to have Security on your neck. The General gave you this lab to develop new weapons for the Midwestern Protectorate. If he ever finds out that you've been using his precious materials to try and develop a family-sized time machine, you're going to be in the soup—but proper."

She wrinkled her nose at him and turned back to the instrument panel. The major pulled a battered pipe from the pocket of his old leather flying jacket, lit it, and then blew a long jet of smoke toward the ceiling.

"Even if you do get in trouble, at least you've had a chance to do the kind of work you're trained for," he said at last. A note of bitterness crept into his voice as he continued. "That's more than I've got. There's no place for flyers any more, and it's getting worse. I've been up exactly once in the last six months. The rest of the time I've been parked in a soft chair five hundred feet underground, watching a telescreen and twisting a knob once in a while. A man can't even ride in one of the big boys any longer. Too many G's." He sighed. "Oh well, maybe someday... What's new with the Monster?"

She didn't look up from her work when she answered. "I think maybe I've got it whipped."

"What's it?"

"The phase control problem. So far I've been able to get a warp set up at the space-time intersect at which I want to establish a portal, but a micro-second after I get it positioned, the field goes out of control and blam! goes another generator."

"And now?"

She ran her tongue over her lower lip and unconsciously lowered her voice. "I've got a field damper worked out that looks as if it might do the trick."

"And if it does?"

"I'll be able to open a little door into any spot in the past that I want to."

"How big a door?"

"Four or five inches. The theoretical maximum is six. Why?"

"I was just wondering what you were going to use it for if you did get it working."

THERE WAS a strange hard note in his voice that caused her to turn toward him in surprise. "Why... why I'm not going to use it for anything. Building a working model was the only way to test the theoretical formulation I worked out."

"You're going to turn it over to the General, then?"

"Why, I suppose so; I've got to explain all those special requisitions somehow. Don't you think I should?"

The major looked at her oddly for a moment and then said, "Before you do, it might be a good idea to spend a little time thinking what *he* might do with it."

"But he couldn't do anything with it," she said, a confused expression on her face. "The portal is too small for anybody to go through."

"But not too small for somebody to reach through," retorted the other gruffly. "This gadget of yours is a natural for a little quiet assassination. Look! The General is losing his war with the Rocky Mountain Republic because of the robot tanks that Norman DeWitt developed for them. So our intelligence checks back and finds that when DeWitt was only three years old he had a severe bout with pneumonia, and was in an oxygen tent for seven days. What would be simpler—if it turns out that the Monster can be used

to open a time warp—than to open a portal into the kid's hospital room some night when the nurse is out, reach through, and turn off the oxygen? Presto, no adult DeWitt. No adult DeWitt, no robot tanks. No robot tanks and the General can mop up the Rocky Mountain Republic just like he did the Northern Federation and the Free State of Columbia."

He tapped the ash out of his pipe, stuffed the bowl full of poorly cured shreds of black tobacco, and then lit it with an old fashioned kitchen match. The girl looked thoughtfully from him to the machine and then back again.

"Why the sudden concern?" she said. "You spend your days tossing guided missiles at people for the greater glory of the Protectorate. If you don't want the General to come out on top, why do you work for him?"

"For the same reason you do, I guess," he said slowly. "You get a chance to do lab work, and I—well, at least I'm controlling something that's flying. But that doesn't mean that I'd welcome the thought of turning what's left of the world over the tender mercies of a homicidal psycho like the General. And with your widget to use against the opposition, it wouldn't be long until he was top dog. You've got to scrap the Monster before he finds out about it."

She started to protest and then stopped. "You're right, of course; I guess that I just haven't got a practical mind. But I'm not going to junk baby until I find out whether that field damper works or not." She paused and then gave a throaty chuckle. "Why don't we make our test run on the General? Think what a break it would have been for the country if he had been strangled at birth."

"Lovely idea," said the officer, "but eliminating him really wouldn't help much, you know. He's a consequence, not a cause. He didn't start World War III; he was just like a couple of hun-

dred like him who turned warlord in the chaos that followed the final break-up and set up their own governments. If you wanted to stop things you'd have to go farther back than the General." He stared thoughtfully at the little spiral of smoke that was curling up from his pipe bowl. "I wonder how far back you would have to go to get the world back on the right track?"

"How about blocking the discovery of atomic energy? If it weren't for the alphabet bombs we'd still have a few skylines left."

HE THOUGHT for a moment and then shook his head. "That wouldn't do it, either. What about the mass bombings of World War II? I'm no military historian but I've always had a hunch that where we got off the track and started to go to hell in a hangingasket was all the way back in the late eighteenth century. To France, to be exact; that's where the development of the modern mass army started."

The girl cleared a space for herself on top of a work table and settled down on it, legs crossed like a small Buddha. "Go ahead," she said, "this sounds interesting."

"I may be wrong," he continued earnestly, "but look! Back when fighting forces were limited to small professional armies, the poor civilians weren't getting slapped around *all* the time. What troops there were, were mercenaries; and when they fought, they fought with each other, not with innocent bystanders. A nice level spot would be selected for a battle, and army A and army B would bang away at each other. If the home team lost, the towns in the vicinity would pay their taxes to somebody else for a while, and that took care of that."

"You're making it sound too good," protested the girl. "Haven't you ever read any accounts of what went on when a city was sacked?"

"Sure. A few women got raped—or at least they claimed they did after it was all over—and a few protesting husbands and boy friends got clonked on the head. But when the invaders pulled out a few days later, there was still a town there. Can you say the same for Pittsburg?"

She shrugged. "All right, so things were better then. But why blame everything on the poor French?"

"Because they saved their revolution from the interventionists by introducing conscription and building the first mass army. After that, peoples warred on peoples rather than professionals on professionals. Without the mass army you wouldn't have total war; and without total war you wouldn't have this!" He threw out his arms and made a circle that included the whole of the battered world.

The girl still looked dubious. "But we don't have mass armies any longer. Most of the population is kept busy in the war plants. The actual fighting is handled by a few thousand technicians, like yourself, who sit underground and direct the armor and the guided missiles by remote control."

"Nonsense!" snorted the major. "Factory workers are under the same military discipline as we are, and so are all the rest. There just aren't any real civilians left any longer. And the whole idea started with the conscript army. Before that, the governments hired professionals to do their fighting for them and the people were pretty much allowed to go on with their own lives."

He stopped suddenly, looked quickly over at the complex machine that stood at the other end of the laboratory, and then with a smothered exclamation, drove one hard fist into the palm of his other hand. "Of course!"

"Of course, what?"

"It just occurred to me that there might be some point to all this talking!" He jumped to his feet and began

to stride nervously up and down the floor. "Look!" he snapped. "How much longer do you think the world can go on the way it has been?"

"Twenty years...maybe thirty. The tools that make the tools are wearing out, and they aren't being replaced."

"And after that?"

"Back to the caves I guess—if there are any of us left to go back. Why?"

He strode over to the machine the girl had constructed and slapped his hand harshly against the control panel. "Get this thing in operation. Maybe the clock can be turned back after all!"

AT TWO O'CLOCK on the morning of March 17th, 1986, a major in the uniform of the Midwestern Protectorate slipped cautiously down a long underground corridor until he reached the end, and then tapped lightly on a heavy steel door. It swung open noiselessly and he slipped inside. When it was safely locked behind him he held out a bulging briefcase.

"I think I've got our man," he said, "but we've got to move fast. I'm afraid the General smells a rat."

"Who is he?" The girl's face was white with fatigue, and there was a nervous tremor in her voice.

"Lazare Carnot, the military genius who was chiefly responsible for the success of the armies of France in the French revolutionary wars. He was the one that rammed the plan for universal conscription through the Committee of Public Safety; that plan made it possible to raise fourteen new armies." He hesitated. "But the idea doesn't look as good to me now as it did when I first thought of it. I'm beginning to get my wind up about the possible consequences."

The girl took the briefcase from him and dumped its contents out on a table. Her close-cropped, red-gold hair was damp with perspiration and there

were dark smudges under her tired eyes.

"Me too," she said, "but have you got an alternative?"

"But what if we make things worse?"

She gave a weary shrug. "I don't see how they could be, but that's a chance we'll have to take."

He pulled out his battered pipe and loaded it. It took four of his old fashioned kitchen matches before he was able to get it going.

"Nervous?"

"If you think I'm jumpy, go take a look at yourself in a mirror," he said. He licked suddenly dry lips, squared his shoulders, and took a deep breath. "The field dampers. Are you sure they're going to work?"

"Nope. I know one way to find out, though."

With that she walked over to the time machine and began a final check of the damper unit she had just finished installing. He looked after her and then turned to the pile of notes that were spread out on the table. An hour later they were both ready. He got up and went over to her. "All set?"

"I think so."

He put an arm around her and drew her to him. "If we are successful, what happens to us?"

"The same thing that happens to the world as we know it." She reached into the pocket of his jacket, took out a match, and lit it. She looked at the little flame somberly for a moment and then blew it out with an explosive puff of breath. "Poof!"

She placed the charred match carefully in an ashtray and then slipped one little hand into his.

"But maybe if the time track doesn't get twisted up too much, you and I will still get born—maybe even meet and fall in love in a decent world where we'll have a chance to do work that is closer to our hearts."

Her hand trembled slightly as she

drew it out of his and reached for the controls of the machine that would open a portal into the eighteenth century.

PART TWO: Yesterday

THE CRUCIAL meeting of the Committee of Public Safety took place in Paris early in July of 1792. If Lazare Carnot had been there to ram through his plan for universal conscription, France would have been saved—for a little while, anyway.

If Lazare Carnot had been there, the timidity of the professional politicians (conscription has never been popular with the masses) wouldn't have won out—but Carnot wasn't there. That morning he had been found dead in his bed. His features were calm. Death had obviously come quickly and painlessly.

His subordinates did the best they could, but it wasn't enough. Carnot's plan for conscripting a national army was tabled by the committee until it was too late. Six months later, the tough professional soldiers of Frederick of Saxe-Coburg marched into Paris, freed the young dauphin, and set him up on the throne of France as Louis XVII.

During the mopping up of the revolutionary armies, a brilliant young officer named Napoleon Bonaparte was killed in action. Other things happened, too—a number of them. Without the spur of mass warfare, technology plodded ahead instead of spurting.

PART THREE: The New Tomorrow

AT TEN O'CLOCK on the morning of March 17th, 1986, Jack O'Hara was waiting for an interview with the personnel manager of Marshall and Smith, Inc. He

could hear the office communicator from where he slumped easily in a soft chair. "My next appointment, Miss Grange," it squawked. There was no one else in the anteroom, so he knocked the heel out of his pipe, put the worn briar into his flight jacket pocket, and came to his feet.

"You can go in now, Mr. O'Henry." There was a little something extra in Miss Grange's voice, which indicated that if he wanted to stop and talk a bit when he came out, she wouldn't object in the least.

"Not O'Henry, O'Hara," said Jack and went into the inner office.

J. B. Roberts, the personnel director of Marshall and Smith, was a small, egg-shaped man who prided himself on his ability to put people immediately at ease. "Mr. O'Henry!" he exclaimed, registering honest pleasure as he rose to his feet and stretched out his hand. "Do sit down!"

Jack pumped the perspiring palm twice and did.

"Lovely weather, isn't it?" continued Roberts, and without waiting for Jack to reply, launched into a long and involved commentary on the chances of New York's jet polo team winning the World Series. Jack waited patiently until he was finished and then, just as the little man was about to launch into step three of establishing warm human relations with a prospective employee, an account of several bright sayings of his six year old, the flyer interrupted.

"I'm available for a sub-contract on the Portuguese job. I've my own fighter, a Vickers rocket-glide, one of the new Hydra models."

Roberts flushed in annoyance. If a man wanted a job with Marshall and Smith, he was expected to have enough respect for the office of personnel manager to keep quiet until it became apparent that the amenities were finished and business was about to begin.

"We never deal with sub-contractors" he snapped—and then unsnapped

as he realized that he had just violated the first law of public relations, *Be Nice*. He coughed to cover his confusion. "Matter of company policy, you know," he said and opened a silver box and extended it to Jack. "Cigaret?"

The other shook his head, pulled out his blackened pipe, and slowly filled it. "Light?" The personnel manager pushed an ornate lighter over to him.

Jack shook his head again and pulled out an old-fashioned kitchen match. "These work," he said laconically.

He concentrated on his pipe until it was burning satisfactorily. "Name isn't O'Henry," he said. "It's O'Hara, Jack O'Hara."

Roberts straightened up in his chair and looked at the pilot with sudden interest. "Why didn't you say so in the first place?"

"You didn't give me a chance."

The personnel manager coughed to cover his confusion, then pressed a button on his desk; a small bar slid out of the wall beside him. "Have a drink?"

"Sure. How about you?"

"I never drink during working hours," said the personnel manager. "But help yourself."

Jack went over, poured himself a stiff three fingers, and then returned to his seat. "Heard you'd landed the contract for the Portuguese job," he said, "so I thought I'd drop over and see what was up."

Roberts hesitated. "We are hiring," he said, "but the comptrollers office frowns on sub-contracting—especially on this job. The competition was pretty stiff, and in order to make the low bid we've had to pare down our combat budget to the bone. But if you'd care to sign on as a master-pilot..." He let his voice trail off and began to inspect his fingernails, as if he'd never seen them before.

Jack got to his feet and stuffed his pipe in the pocket of his worn flying

jacket. "Guess I'd better go over and check with the Rommell outfit then. I don't particularly like the way they do business, but a job's a job." He pulled a faded beret out of his back pocket and jammed it down on his head. "See you around," he said, and started for the door.

THE LITTLE personnel manager jumped from his chair and came scuttling after him. "Don't rush off," he said, grabbing him by one arm and steering him back toward the desk. "Maybe we can work something out in spite of the Comptroller; what's your proposition?"

"Two thousand international credits for every aircraft I destroy in flight; five hundred for each I get on the ground. In addition I work my own time and pick my own missions."

The personnel manager threw up his hands in protest. "Two thousand is out of the question!" He gave Jack a calculating look. "I might be able to get you fifteen hundred if I really fought for it." Jack started toward the door again. "Or even seventeen-fifty," he added hastily, "but two thousand..." Jack kept on going.

Roberts waited hopefully for some sign of hesitation. When there wasn't any, he let out a long sigh and said mournfully, "All right, two thousand, but it's not going to make me popular with the boys who hold the purse strings. You're a hard man to deal with, O'Hara."

"I have to be," said the flyer coldly as he came back and sat down; "it's my neck I'm selling. Now let's get down to cases."

The personnel manager cleared his throat. "Well, the usual provisions will apply. You'll come under the nominal jurisdiction of the section manager and the foreman of the air—"

O'Hara interrupted him with a decisive shake of his head. "I'm a good enough man to set my own terms, Rob-

erts. I fly where I want to, when I want to—and the only person I take orders from is me!"

The other looked longingly at the liquor cabinet, fought with himself, and lost. Pouring out two drinks he handed one to Jack. "You win," he said unhappily. He held up his glass. "Here's to victory over Rommell and Company and a sound six percent return!"

Jack downed his glass without enthusiasm.

"And now back to business," said the personnel manager. "If we can get everything worked out, I'll shoot a memo over the legal department by special messenger and they'll have a contract ready for you this afternoon. How about fuel and maintenance? And do you have your own gunner?"

"I'll get my necessities from your fields and have them charged against my account. You can supply me with a mechanic and air gunner, and I'll pay International Air Fighters Union scale for them. Anything else?"

The personnel manager hesitated. "You were with Montgomery and Haig on the Nicaragua contract, weren't you?"

Jack nodded.

The personnel manager went back to inspecting his nails. "Word is going around that their special weapons section has been trying to develop an atomic warhead. Anything to it?"

"The same word is going around about Marshall and Smith, and every other major operator. Anything to that?" Jack countered.

ROBERTS hesitated and then said, "Not as far as we're concerned; at least not now. We spent almost half a million trying to find out how. We did, too. The only trouble is that just to set up initial production facilities require such a fantastic amount of capital that private industry just can't handle it. But there's always the outside chance that our boys overlooked

something. I get nightmares thinking what would happen to the trade if somebody should stumble on a cheap and easy way to make an atomic bomb. They'd be able to put in the low bid on every international dispute that broke out; and with a weapon like that, none of us would dare take a contract with the opposing side."

"Ain't it the truth," said O'Hara.

"That's why I was wondering about Montgomery and Haig. Are they?"

"Yep!"

"Do you know how they're making out?"

O'Hara gave another affirmative grunt.

"Well?" said the other impatiently.

"I figure that answer is worth about five hundred credits."

"You're working for us now," said the other angrily.

"Now, yes," said O'Hara, "but not then. If you want what I know, you pay for it; I'm not in business for my health."

Roberts started to protest and then caught himself. "You really know?"

"I said so, didn't I?"

"Three hundred?"

O'Hara shook his head.

"Oh—all right," said the personnel manager wearily, "it'll go on Combat Intelligence's budget, anyway. What's the word?"

"Nothing," said Jack laconically. "They ran up the same blind alley you did. The job can be done, but it's just too big." He stood up. "Give me a chit for that five hundred; I'll pick it up at the cashier's window on my way out. When do I leave for Portugal, by the way?"

With an effort the personnel manager shifted gears. "Tuesday. One of our semi-rigids is leaving late in the afternoon. Can you have your ship crated and on board by then?"

Jack made a quick mental calculation and then nodded. "Can do," he said. "I'll drop by this afternoon for

my contract. And a small advance. I'm a bit short right now."

FOR SEVERAL minutes after the flyer left, J. B. Roberts sat at his desk thoughtfully. Finally he flicked a switch on his intercom and said, "Miss Grange, the man who just left is a licensed combat pilot named Jack O'Hara."

"Not O'Henry?"

"No," said the personnel manager impatiently, "not O'Henry. O'Hara, Jack O'Hara. You must have heard of him, he's one of the best."

There was silence for a moment and then she said in an excited voice, "You mean *he* was really *him*?"

"Obviously. Have Intelligence run a field check on him at once. I want to be sure that he's clean before we turn him loose."

"Who are you worried about, the Commies?"

Roberts snorted. "That bunch of snoopers? No, I just want to be sure that Montgomery and Haig still don't have any strings on him. Things are getting tight and we can't afford a leak."

2



AFTER HE supervised the unloading of his Hydra at the Lisbon municipal airdock, Jack caught a lift with a rumbling land engine that was pulling a string of trailers out

to the field where his ship was to be re-assembled. He sat in the cab high above the clanking steam engine, answering the driver's chatter in monosyllables.

"No, sir," said the engineer, "I ain't been in action and I ain't figuring on going in, either."

Jack puffed away on his pipe, look-

ing out the cab window at the Portuguese countryside, steeped in the poverty of centuries of feudalistic repression. The hills were barren and drab, colorless, and the inhabitants they passed reflected the empty dinginess of the land. Uncomfortable depression grew upon him.

"The money ain't worth it," the engineer explained, swerving his train ponderously to avoid a donkey cart. "The way I figure it, this job of mine gives me all the advantages of working for a military contractor, and none of the disadvantages. I get double the pay of a driver back in the Confederacy, but I'm safe."

Jack snorted. "I make my drinking money out of knocking over land engines; I collected sixteen bonuses on my last job."

The driver shrugged. "Sure, I get shot at once in a while; but look at the traffic back home! There's more engines pile up in traffic accidents on the East-West turnpike in one day than are shot up during a whole contract. You got some risk wherever you work. Hell, you can break your arm picking your nose if your luck is bad enough."

He spat reflectively out the window and then cursed when he realized that it was shut. "This job's nothing like running a steel-clad in open combat," he said as he mopped the bullet-proof pane with his sleeve; "a guy that takes a job like that is just plain asking for it."

"They make four times what you do—and there's always bonuses."

"Yeah, but how are you going to spend it once you're dead?"

Jack yawned and pocketed his now cold briar. "A man who can't take care of himself has no place in the business. And casualties never run very high. It's not as if you had a bunch of civilians mucking around shooting at each other. The men who work for the companies are professionals. I went

through one job where nobody was hurt at all." It was a long speech for Jack O'Hara to have made.

The driver threw on his blowers as they started up a long winding hill. "Which one was that?"

"The Irish Succession. Our outfit pulled a couple of fast ones and the other firm had to quit cold."

"That clambake!" The driver started laughing. "That's one I wish I'd been in on. All play and no work! But you gotta remember that that was an exception. And look what happened to Krupp, Limited. They were laughed out of the business. No country is going to take bids from a contractor who loses that easily."

O'Hara yawned again and settled back in his uncomfortable seat. He considered most conversation a waste of time, and this one was no exception. Besides, they were nearing the field where his Hydra was to be reassembled.

WHEN THEY got there he grunted his thanks and hiked over to the operations shack, waving a greeting two or three times on the way to workers he'd met on other jobs. He made a mental note that the engineer, who was handling this contract had obviously decided to use this field for the whole operation, rather than dividing his working force between several strips. He didn't like that; the German firm, Rommell and Sons, who were handling the job for the Spanish, were no upstarts. It wouldn't take them long to realize that a quick saturation raid would seriously cripple the forces of Marshall and Smith.

It was probably a matter of funds. The Portuguese were notorious for low appropriations. No wonder they'd lost their Goa colony in India, and Mozambique; they invariably wound up with some firm that had to bid low to get the job, and then had to pinch pennies to make a profit.

He opened the door of the operations shack and strode in. A male secretary looked up and frowned his importance. "What can I do for you?"

"My name's O'Hara. I'd like to see the foreman."

"Jack O'Hara?"

The pilot nodded. "I'll tell Mr. Hawkins you're here."

"Hawkins? Not Fancy Pants Hawkins?" O'Hara let out an anguished groan.

The secretary was flustered. "Mr. Hawkins is foreman of the air division on this contract. You'll work under him."

"Want to bet?" asked Jack softly.

The secretary spoke into his inter-office communicator while the pilot leaned back against the wall and loaded his prehistoric briar. "Mr. Hawkins will see you in about a half hour."

Jack snorted, pushed by the secretary's desk, and went through the inner door. "Hi, Fancy Pants," he said. "What's this about waiting? It's me, Jack O'Hara, remember?"

The small, immaculately-clad little man evidently did; he jumped to his feet sputtering angrily. "Listen, O'Hara, I haven't forgotten that little deal you pulled on me down in Nicaragua, and I'm not about to. But this time you're taking orders from me. I'll see you when I want to see you and..."

Jack reached forward and with a slow, unhurried motion, shoved the little man back down into his chair. "Better read my contract, Fancy Pants," he drawled. "All I want from you is fuel, a good mechanic, and a better gunner." He gave the other a contemptuous look and then strode out of the room.

HIS ALARM was set for seven but Jack never got a chance to hear it go off. At four the intercom beside his bed buzzed noisily. He sat up sleepily and switched on his bed lamp.

"Yeah?" he growled.

A female voice answered. "Special mission. Report to your ship at once."

Jack grumbled but got up and got dressed anyway. He was too broke to be turning down jobs this early in the game. Five minutes later, still yawning sleepily, he approached the Hydra, helmet and oxygen mask in hand and a bundled ribbon chute swinging at his haunches. His mind was still fuzzy but it would clear in moments once he hit the air.

It was a clear bright night and a full moon drenched the field with light. By the Hydra a girl was waiting, a pretty little thing a head shorter than he was, with close cropped red-gold hair and a figure that even the bulky flying suit she was wearing couldn't quite hide.

"Hi, O'Hara," she said as he came up to her.

He nodded sleepily. "I'm ready," he said; "where's the ground crew and my gunner?"

She grinned up at him. "I've got a card that says I'm a member in good standing of the International Airfighters Union."

"That's nice," said Jack absently, "but you operations people might as well get one thing straight right now. When I'm working I need my sleep. From now on, when I'm called for a night mission I expect everything to be ready when I get here—gunner in place and my ship on the launching ramp ready for take off. Is that clear?"

He spoke more sharply than he intended but the girl didn't seem to mind. "You don't understand," she said. "I'm riding as your gunner this time. Mr. Hawkins said you might object, but this is a very special job and I have to be along."

"Object is right!" snapped O'Hara. "I'm going back to bed. You can tell Hawkins to give me a call when he's got things organized the way they should be."

"No me, no flight," she said.

"O. K., so no flight." He turned to go.

"Take a look at this first. There's a good chunk of change involved." As he hesitated she handed him an envelope. He tore it open impatiently and pulled out a standard dispatch blank. Lighting match after match to make out what was typed, he finally read through it.

From: Office of the Foreman, Air Division.

To: Jack O'Hara, Sub-Contractor
Subject: Special Assignment

A situation has developed which makes it desirable to request your services in view of the range of your aircraft. Standard mileage rate plus a bonus of 1,000 international credits will be given you upon successful completion of the following assignment:

1. Fly to the small airstrip just outside the village of Largos (marked on the attached chart).

2. Pick up two crates weighing approximately two hundred kilos each and deliver them to the Free Port of Lanares.

3. Return to base.

The bearer of this, an agent of the company who is on special assignment to the air section, will accompany you as gunner. Her orders are to be obeyed without question.

SIGNED: Claude Hawkins, Foreman

JACK FROWNED down at the message and made a few quick mental calculations. The first hop would be a breeze. Largos was only two hundred kilometers away; and even though it was on the wrong side of the Spanish frontier, it was outside the designated combat area. If there was a Commie observation team at the strip, the worst that could happen would be a two-hundred credit fine for operating a combat craft outside authorized limits.

The Free Port of Lanares was another matter. It was a long way off. With luck he'd be able to make it all right, but he'd probably have to expend all the booster rockets in his combat reserve. For the last hundred

kilometers he'd be a sitting duck if any of Rommell's ships happened to be snooping around outside the reserved area.

"Did you read this?"

The girl nodded.

"I don't like it," he said. "I'm a fighter, not a common carrier."

The girl's face tightened and her right hand slid unobtrusively toward a slight bulge in her flight jacket pocket. O'Hara started to crumple the memo and then smoothed it out again.

"Still," he growled, "a thousand credits is something I could use right now. And maybe I'll run into a couple of sitting ducks along the way."

"But the air foreman said you were to avoid any sort of aggressive action!"

"What's the matter, kid? Afraid you'll get shot at?"

She shook her head indignantly. "Of course not. It's just that Hawkins considers the safe delivery of those crates to be extremely important. After all, he's boss on this job."

Jack laughed. "Not mine; I got a contract. But we'll see what cooks along the way. I've never been one to stick my neck out—that's why I still got one." He looked her up and down critically. "Women and flying don't mix—but it's too late at night to dig up a new gunner, and I feel uncomfortable between the shoulderblades with nobody covering my rear. Round up a ground crew, will you?"

The girl hesitated a moment before she answered. "Be more trouble than it's worth. We'd lose an hour by the time they got out of bed, dressed, and waited around for the coffee to get hot so they could have a couple of cups and a cigaret before they went to work."

"We can handle the Hydra ourselves. She's already fueled; all that we have to do is to roll her forward to the launching ramp and snap on the

catapult connector. The whole business won't take more than five minutes. If we get off now we can get almost to Largos before sun-up."

O'Hara thought for a moment and then nodded his assent.

3



SIDE FROM the four interceptor pilots playing cards in the ready tent at the far end of the field, and the anti-aircraft crews standing by their guns in the pits, everybody at the

base was sound asleep.

"I'm going to be the most unpopular man in Portugal in about two minutes," chuckled O'Hara as he gave the control lever of the hydraulic lift a slow turn and lowered the Hydra cautiously onto the take-off dolly. He was right—there was a close similarity between the smashing explosions of the banks of rockets that projected on each side of the four wheel catapult cart, and a stick of frag bombs marching across the runway toward quarters. By the time the base personnel were awake enough to realize what was up, most of them would be dressed in combat gear and running toward action stations.

While Jack made a quick visual check of the Hydra, the girl climbed into the double cockpit where they sat back-to-back and began going over the lashings that held the unwieldy bulk of her Gatling sixty in safety position. Satisfied at last, he plugged the igniter cord into a slot in the belly of the ship, climbed into his seat, and slid the canopy forward and secured it. After a quick check to be sure that his landing gear was up, and his wings set at maximum retraction, he turned to the little figure that sat behind him. "All set?" he shouted.

Her helmeted head nodded.

"Hang on to your guts, then. Here we go!" He braced his feet against the floorboards and pushed hard to see that the acceleration gear on his seat was in working order, took a deep breath, and then reached forward and punched the catapult igniter button.

There was a sudden cracking roar from underneath the ship; then he was slammed back in his seat as the rockets on the dolly hurled it and the attached Hydra along the gleaming rails of the takeoff ramp. Faster they went, and faster. Jack was pinned back in his seat, helpless as if being crushed by a giant hand. There was a momentary blackout as the rails tilted upward and they roared skyward at a forty-five degree angle. And then with a barely perceptible jerk, the ramp was left behind. All the remaining rockets on the dolly let loose at once to give the Hydra one final tremendous boost; then the automatic disconnectors went into action, and the catapult cart dropped off to go arcing down through the darkness toward the half acre of deep sand that marked the end of its carefully plotted trajectory.

ONCE THE intolerable pressure was released, O'Hara sagged against his safety belt for a moment; then, with a shake of his head to clear it, he grabbed hold of the control stick and kicked over the switch that would cut out the automatic controls. With one quick sweep of his head he assured himself that the moonlit sky was clear of aircraft and concentrated on his instruments. His eyes weighed the climbing altimeter needle against his dropping air speed. Just as he was about to stall out, he reached forward and fired his first bank of rockets. These were slower-burning than the ones on the cart and the pressure wasn't nearly as bad as that applied during catapult takeoff. By the time he reached the top of his arc, his altimeter registered

twenty-one thousand feet. Just as his ship was about to drop, he took hold of the controls of the wing extension gear and slowly, cautiously, began to crank out the great soaring wings that telescoped, one section inside the other, within the short stubby airfoils he used when flying under rocket power.

It took him ten minutes before they were fully out, great tapered gull-like wings that extended a good seventy feet on each side of his stubby fuselage—ten minutes in which his speed dropped from an original rocketing six hundred to a gentle soaring sixty.

Silently the Hydra drifted through the night, its spreading wings sensitive to the slightest updraft, lazily wheeling in the general direction of Largos. As Jack's fingers delicately moved the controls, automatically seeking every favorable current of air and hanging on to it as long as possible, he turned his head and called to his gunner, "Better unlimber your Gatling. If one of Rommell's ground stations spots us, an interceptor may come up to see if he can't get himself a scalp for breakfast."

She didn't answer for a minute; when she did, her voice was muffled and had a suspicious quaver to it. Jack looked back at her sharply. She had one hand over her mouth and seemed to be trying to restrain an abdominal heaving.

He let out a snort of disgust and turned back to the controls. It was bad enough that the Airfighters Union let women qualify for combat ratings, but when they issued a ticket to a female who couldn't even take an ordinary catapult takeoff... He sat grumbling to himself as the Hydra floated down through the darkness toward Largos.

The air was good for soaring that night. Only once over a long flat plain did he drop low enough so that he had to expend a tail rocket to recover altitude. The rest of the trip he slid easily from updraft to updraft, alternately

gliding down and spiraling up. It was slow traveling, but it was a free ride; and in case of emergency, the bunched rockets in the tail of the Hydra contained all the speed he could possibly use.

THE SUN was almost up when he finally spotted Largos in the distance. "There's the strip," said his gunner, pointing to a plateau a few miles north of the town. "We're to land on a red flare. There will be a yellow one to give us a sixty second notice."

"That's no good," said Jack. "I can't get down that fast unless I retract and dive in. On a strip that short I'd have to use rocket power for braking, and I can't spare any. We're going to need every tube we have to get us to Lanares."

"There will be fuel inserts waiting for us down there," she said briefly. Jack shrugged and began to check the ground below.

Largos was several miles away; but he could make out enough in the early morning light to cause him to blink in amazement, and swing the Hydra over for a closer look. Just to the east of the town, almost hidden in a long winding valley, he could make out the jutting fingers of high smokestacks; then, as he drifted closer, the whiteness of block after block of new concrete buildings. At the far end, a fast mountain stream roared down a large tunnel and disappeared into the industrial cluster, emerging at the far end slow-running and muddied. On the surrounding mountains themselves there were scars of new excavations and fans of dumped waste spreading down from the trestles that came out of dark tunnel mouths.

He let out a low whistle. "Didn't know this country was good for anything but goats," he said. He looked quickly back at his gunner. She was staring down at the great operation below as if it were a nest of scorpions.

"Hey, there—what's the matter, kid?"

She didn't answer. He shrugged and swung over the edge of the winding valley to take advantage of an up-draft. As the Hydra slid into it and lifted slowly upward, he looked down again and said curiously, "Funny I haven't heard about this. You'd think an operation that big—especially in a country as backward as Spain—would be splashed all over the papers. There must be a lot of foreign capital involved."

"There is," said the girl bitterly. "We'd better get in position to make a landing; the one-minute flare should go up any time now."

Jack circled back toward the white ribbon of the landing strip. He gave a tired yawn and was just fumbling in the pocket of his flight jacket for his pipe when there was a sudden distant rattle of small arms fire from the direction of the great factory. He swung around, startled, and then banked the Hydra over sharply so he could see what was going on.

THE FIGHTING seemed to be concentrated around the high gate where the winding road that led down to the old town entered the plant. He heard the girl behind him swearing softly to herself but he didn't turn; he was too absorbed in watching the gunfight below. The firing suddenly increased in volume as machine guns began to open up from positions along the walls. Then a crashing explosion came from the direction of the gates, and a large land engine roared out onto the road and went careening down the highway toward the town. A hail of flickering tracer fire hosed after it. It swerved suddenly as if the driver or some vital mechanism had been hit and almost went off the road. Somehow it fought its way back and got around a bend in the road that gave it temporary protection from the pursuing fire. The vehicle was under control

again, but it wasn't moving with its former speed. Jack snatched his binoculars from the rack beside him and peered down. With the aid of the glasses he could make out plumes of vapor spurting from the driving mechanism of the engine. Some of its steam tubes had obviously been punctured by the machine gun fire.

The firing back at the plant was dying down. When Jack swung his glasses in the direction of the blasted gate, he could make out tiny figures retreating into the safety of the hills.

A tap on his shoulder made him jump slightly. He had been so absorbed in the fight that he had momentarily forgotten both his mission and the girl behind him.

"There's the flare!" she said tensely, pointing to the left. Jack turned and saw an amber light rising slowly in the sky. "We'd better get started down; we haven't got much time to spare. Something slipped up somewhere."

Her voice broke the spell of combat. Jack made a quick estimate of the scene below and shook his head violently. "I don't know what's going on down there," he snapped, "but I'm not going to get mixed up in it unless I get specific orders from base!"

"You've got your orders!" she said angrily. "Now get down there!"

Jack shook his head again. "My orders were to pick up a couple of crates, not to get mixed up in a gunfight between some crazy civilians."

"Those aren't civilians."

His voice was cold with disbelief. "Are you trying to tell me that any of the companies would engage in an open fight like that outside a designated area? They'd be read out of the industry in nothing flat."

She let out a short bitter laugh. "That plant is defended by a unit of the new Spanish Regular Army."

It was Jack's turn to laugh. He

burst into a howl of derision. "Regular Army! You're a hundred years behind the times, kid. The last time a government tried to train and equip its own forces was back in the 1860's, when those penny-pinching New England industrialists decided it would be cheaper to conscript a gang of plowboys to fight against the Confederacy than it would be to hire some trained troops from Europe."

He chuckled. "They wouldn't listen to their own generals. Not until the Swiss Guards marched into Boston, that is, and then it was too late." He reached forward and switched on his transmitter. "I'm going to call into base and see if I can find out what's up."

"Want to bet?"

Jack turned in surprise and found himself looking into the ugly muzzle of a Weber Duobore. He tensed, poised for a sudden lunge, but there was something in the way she held the weapon that made him think better of it. Before he could say anything a red star shell arced up from the landing strip. "That's our signal," she snapped. "Get down there!"

He hesitated.

"I'm not the pilot you are," she continued, "but if you force me to kill you, I'm perfectly capable of taking this ship in myself."

Jack looked back at her again and then gave a shrug of submission. "I'm not going to argue with a Weber. Glide or rocket landing?"

"Rocket," she said. "We've got to get in and out fast."

JACK NODDED as he pushed his stick forward and hit his wing retractor at the same time. As the great soaring surfaces came in, each section telescoped smoothly into the next until nothing remained to support the Hydra but a short stubby air-foil projecting a few feet on each side. With ninety-five percent of its support gone, the

plane dropped like a rock. Jack tensed when the air speed indicator hit five hundred and then suddenly, without warning, jerked the control stick back into his belly. The blackout was instantaneous. The difference was that Jack was used to it and the girl wasn't. As he came out he twisted and grabbed the Weber from her limp fingers, then turned and punched the stud on his transmitter that would tune him in on the Marshall and Smith band.

"O'Hara calling M and S Temporary Base One," he said rapidly and then quickly repeated the call. The base operator answered immediately. "Come in, O'Hara."

"Give me Hawkins, Air Division, at once. This is an emergency!"

A half a minute later he heard Hawkins' sleepy voice. "This is Hawkins. Where in the hell are you and what's the idea of bothering me at this hour of the morning?"

"Where I'm supposed to be, at Largos. What kind of a mission did you send me on, anyway? There's a king-size gang war going on underneath me right now. If you expect me to get mixed up in that, I want twenty-five hundred extra and a written assurance that I'm not doing anything that's a serious violation of Commie regulations. I ain't about to get my fighter's license jerked for you or anybody else."

"Largos?" gasped the other, suddenly awake. "What are you doing over Largos?"

"Getting ready to pick up a couple of crates—if we can get together on the price, that is."

There was a sudden burst of profanity from the cockpit speaker.

"What's the matter, Fancy Pants?" asked Jack curiously. "You sent me over here. What are you trying to pull off anyway?" The answer was lost as a spanner from the emergency kit in the rear cockpit descended forcibly on the back of his head.

4



WHEN HE came to, he found himself stretched out on a hard-surfaced runway, his jacket neatly folded under his head for a pillow. Groaning, he pulled himself to a sitting position and looked groggily around. The Hydra was sitting a hundred yards away; beside it stood a steaming, bullet-riddled transport; and off in the direction of Largos he could hear the hammering of machine gun fire.

He tried to get to his feet but he wasn't up to it yet. He sat watching as a small knot of men pushed a handcart up to the rear of the damaged land engine, took two long wooden crates off it, and pushed them toward the Hydra. He didn't see the girl for a minute; then he spotted her sitting in the front cockpit of his plane. The canopy was back and she was leaning out watching the approaching cart. When it was alongside the ship she shouted something and disappeared from sight. A moment later the doors of a small bomb bay slowly opened.

A bomb bay wasn't standard equipment for a Hydra, but Jack had had one installed. When fighting was slow he could always pick up a few thousand credits getting his opponents on the ground. It wasn't too much to his liking, but he wasn't in business for fun. Once, on the Icelandic invasion, he had caught eight Mitsuki, Ltd. ships on the ground, half-assembled; he had managed to get seven of them with one stick of frag bombs. It had been a lucrative afternoon.

The four men with the cart grunted and groaned getting the two crates into the bomb bay, but they finally made it. Jack tested his legs again,

found they would hold him though they were still a bit rubbery, and wobbled over to his ship. Just as he got there the girl climbed down from the cockpit.

"Sorry I had to sap you," she said apologetically, "but there wasn't time for an argument. There still isn't!" She gestured in the direction of the road that led from the strip to Largos. Machine guns were still chopping away in the near distance, but added to them now was the crump of heavy explosive.

"What you're hearing for the first time are the mortars of a national army in operation," she said grimly. "Our men are trying to hold a road block but they won't be able to stand up much longer against those." She turned and barked sharply at the men who were trying to fit the two crates into place in the bomb bay. "Step on it! There'll be fighters over in a minute and we're sitting ducks down here."

Jack looked at her in bewilderment. His head ached too much for him to be properly resentful as yet. "What are you talking about? We're way outside the designated combat area. No company ship would dare to attack us. Somebody would be sure to get his registration number and he'd have his license jerked before he had a chance to get back to base."

"Don't be too sure of that," she said somberly. "If we aren't able to pull this job off, licenses aren't going to mean much any more." She looked uneasily up at the sky. "Rommell has a hidden base, no more than five minutes flying time from here; it's being used to train pilots for the new Spanish Air Force. This row has been going on for a good eight."

Jack started to laugh and then stopped as his trained ears suddenly caught the whistle of rocket interceptors in the distance. He grabbed the girl's arm and pointed. "Something's coming in fast. Let's get the hell out of here before we get clobbered."

"Not without the crates." Jack started to protest but then realized that she had possession of the Weber again.

THE WHISTLING sound grew louder, and suddenly they were over the field, three stubby winged rocket interceptors with guns winking in their sharp noses. With one instinctive lunge Jack grabbed the girl and rolled under the damaged ground engine. There was a sound of crescendoing thunder as the fighters roared over, guns hammering; and then they were gone.

For the first time in his life Jack found himself more concerned about the condition of a woman than he was about his ship. The girl was pressed closely against him, sobbing convulsively. His arms tightened around her and his lips brushed across the top of her curly head. He wanted to soothe her but he didn't know the proper words. Instead he said gruffly, "Snap out of it, kid. Rocket interceptors are no good on ground strafe jobs; they go too fast. Come on, let's get out of here."

As he rolled out from under the truck and ran over to check his Hydra, he could still hear the planes in the distance. They were swinging around, preparatory to making another pass. One of the four men was sprawled out beside the Hydra, blood pumping from a great hole in his chest, but the other three were still working. They hadn't run for cover when the planes came over. Just as Jack got to them they finished. One of them jerked his thumb skyward abruptly and then they ran off in the direction of the firing.

Jack checked his rocket tubes quickly and then grunted his satisfaction when he saw that new fuel inserts had been put in to replace the ones he had expended. He turned back to the truck. The girl had crawled out from underneath and was looking around in a dazed fashion. He grabbed her by the arm and boosted her up into the gunner's seat. Then he climbed up into

his own. In the distance the sound of the interceptors grew rapidly louder.

"Strap in tight," he yelled. "I'm going to try a stall blast-off." With one quick motion he ran his wings out to maximum extension, and then cut in a single tube. The Hydra began to roll forward under the easy thrust, picking up speed slowly. When he was doing thirty, Jack hauled back gently on his stick. Under the lift of its great wings, the Hydra soared lightly into the air, climbing at a steep angle. Behind him he heard the hum of gears as the girl swung the heavy Gatling multi-barreled sixty up into firing position.

"Here they come!" she shouted and a second later the Hydra shuddered to the thudding *Pom Pom Pom* of the Gatling, as she opened up on the interceptors that were streaking toward them. Jack was only a hundred feet up but he didn't dare wait any longer. He pulled the nose of his ship straight up and simultaneously threw his wing retractor control onto *Emergency In* and set off a full bank of rear rockets. It was a tricky maneuver. If the rocket thrust didn't build up fast enough, he would fall out of his stall and spin into the ground; on the other hand, if speed built up too fast while his gliding wings were not yet fully retracted, the mounting air pressure would rip them off.

A sigh of relief whistled past his tight lips as the wings clicked in and the Hydra roared skyward at the end of a spouting pillar of flame, a sigh that was suddenly cut off as the three interceptors arced in on him, guns flaming. Jack had to sit and take it; he couldn't waste rocket thrust on defensive maneuvering. He needed altitude, lots of it, and he needed it fast. If they didn't get him on this pass, he'd be ready for them on the next.

HE HUNCHED his shoulders as they closed in, waiting for the slamming of steel-jacketed slugs into his back. And then they were past, two

on one side and one on the other. As they banked sharply in order to swing around and get on his tail, Jack swore sharply. They had the red painted noses that identified all Rommell fighters, but in addition each wing carried something new and alien—the crossed daggers of the Spanish Corporate State. The girl had been right. As he turned to speak to her, he spotted the interceptors boring in again.

"Five o'clock high," he shouted and made a quick check of his altimeter. This time he had the altitude he needed to move around in, but he could still use a bit more. The others had five thousand feet on him. He kicked on an additional bank of rockets and clawed toward the early morning sky. His fingers moved expertly as he charged his nose guns and twisted the rheostat for the electric sight image on his windshield.

He would rather have avoided them, but they were between him and Llanes. He checked for cumulus clouds. There was one above and ahead; he made a quick estimate of its distance and then grunted in satisfaction.

They came in one at a time, not bothering to leave a man above. Overconfident—he hoped. He waited for the last split second, judging his distance, waiting until he felt the other pilot was about to touch his trigger buttons. He waited, waited...

Suddenly he yanked the stick back hard and over to the left: The Hydra snapped over on its side and reversed direction. The other plane shot by underneath him. It was a single seater, they all were. He had that advantage. Even though they were faster, the firepower of the Hydra was greater. The girl behind him, with her heavy Gatling, was invaluable. With three against one it would be impossible to keep them off his tail; but his tail had a sting in it.

The rocket interceptor that had made the first pass was banking hard,

way in the distance, trying to turn tighter and tighter in order to get back at him. The other two had completed their turns, and, still above him, were preparing for their passes.

He was in a tight spot, and suddenly he found himself worrying about the girl in the gunner's seat behind him. His lips tightened and he fought again for altitude. This far, he'd seen no indication that he had the advantage in either speed or maneuverability. And, though the Spanish pilots obviously didn't have his skill and experience, the three to one odds more than made up for that.

As the other two began coming in, he made a quick calculation and then fired an emergency bank. In seconds he began to feel the shock wave begin to hum. He was doing over seven hundred miles now. He darted a glance over his shoulder. They were still after him and pulling up rapidly. He couldn't outrun them.

THERE ARE two places to hide in the sky—only two. One is in the sun and the other is in a cloud. Jack's Hydra was specially designed for the latter. He made a quick estimate of the distance between him and the cumulus cloud he was trying to reach, and decided that with luck he was going to make it. If he could, and they wanted to stick around, he'd show them what a Hydra was good for. If his timing was right, that was, and if they were as eager to get him as they seemed to be.

For a moment he was afraid he was going to have to use one of his few remaining banks of rockets to make it in time, but he slipped into the white nothingness just before the Spanish ships got within firing range. He checked his instruments carefully and then put the Hydra into a sharp climb. He was almost at stalling speed when he came up through the rolling top of the cloud into the early morning sun-

light. One of the Spanish fighters was circling up above waiting for him. He just grinned and shoved his nose down again; let it wait until it was too late—this was his element. He dropped a couple of hundred feet down into the thick white vapor, leveled off, and slowly began to extend his great soaring wings. He began to whistle tunelessly as the Hydra circled slowly in the heart of the cloud.

He turned to the girl behind him. She was busy fitting a new ammo drum into the Gatling. "How far from Largos did you say that Rommell air strip was?" he asked.

"Just a second." There was a click as the drum slipped into place. "About five minutes interceptor time. Why?"

He looked at his watch and then made a quick mental calculation. Five minutes over. The passes must have taken up three. And seven or eight minutes since take off. "About four more minutes should do it," he said with savage satisfaction.

"Do what?"

"Set those interceptors up for me. They're only good for twenty minutes in the air. They're supposed to be used strictly for local defense and aren't equipped with soaring wings. They'll never make it back to their base now; they were too anxious to get me. That means they'll have to land at the Largos strip to refuel."

"We're safe then?" she said in relief.

He sat watching his chronometer. "We are now," he said at last. "Let's go!" Before she could answer he hit the wing retraction control and kicked the Hydra over into a steep dive.

"Where are you going?" the girl behind him shouted. "We've got to get those crates to Lanares."

"Later," he growled. "I've got a little score to settle first. And don't start waving that popgun of yours around, or banging me on the head again. You may be able to land this crate but you'd never be able to nurse it all the

way to the coast yourself. You just tend to your Gatling and let me handle things my own way."

WHEN THEY broke out of the bottom of the cloud, Jack saw one of the interceptors almost directly below, out of fuel and in a steep glide toward Largos. The tense minutes of maneuvering had taken them miles away from the little town. A second ship was off to the left a mile or so and much lower.

This was his game, the high floating, spiraling like a hawk, and then the sudden plummeting dive. Down he went, down, faster and faster. The other pilot suddenly saw him and fell off on one wing. Jack grinned mirthlessly as his right thumb felt for the firing button. He touched it, softly, gently, and his nose guns flamed. He caught a quick flash of the white face of the Spanish pilot staring back at him; then his guns found their mark and the interceptor seem to crumple in midair. He kicked left rudder as he flashed past it and went hurtling down on the second plane.

He didn't have the speed he had had before but he still had enough to close in like a hawk on a chicken. When the Spanish plane saw it couldn't get away, it zoomed toward him, firing as it came. There was a moment of thunder as the Hydra's guns raked the other ship; then it shuddered, fell off on one wing, and went spinning toward the ground. Jack banked sharply and looked around for the third interceptor. He finally spotted it but it was too far away to go after. He pointed his nose up and held it until his flying speed was low enough to let him get his wings out. When he was finally floating safely he stretched and then relaxed in his seat.

"Got away," he said. "But, two isn't a bad morning's work." He paused as a sudden unhappy thought suddenly came to mind. There was nothing in

his contract about getting paid for combat outside the small designated area that had been cleared of civilians and turned over to the companies. "Or at least it would be at regular rates. Do you think Fancy Pants will authorize payment on those?"

The girl didn't answer.

"Well?" he demanded, swinging around in his seat. She was slumped limply against her safety belt and there was a jagged hole in the canopy beside her. One of the interceptor's desperate bursts had struck home. Jack pulled her toward him as far as he could and made a quick check. A little trickle of blood was running from a shallow cut in her forehead, but that seemed to be all. He let out a sigh of relief. It was only a crease.

He eased her back in her seat and turned back to his controls. A quick check of his tube indicators confirmed what he already knew, he had only two banks of rockets left—and Lanares was five hundred kilometers away.

He'd better hang on to those charges, he decided. There were mountains most of the way and with luck he'd be able to find enough thermals to take him through; but overloaded as he was, he'd better have something in reserve for an emergency.

5



THE SHORTEST course was straight over Largos and the sprawling industrial plant just beyond it, but he circled cautiously to the left. There were machine guns down there and at five thousand feet they could be dangerous.

His glide path was so flat that the Hydra seemed barely to be moving. He scanned the sky constantly, searching

for the ships that he was sure would arrive before too long. He wasn't doing more than fifty, but there was nothing he could do about that until the terrain made some good updrafts available.

The Hydra was down to six thousand when he saw them, six ships like his own boring in from the west under full rocket power. One hand snapped automatically toward the wing retractor controls and the other grabbed for the ignitor switch that would set off one of his two remaining banks of rockets—and then he hesitated. They were coming from the wrong direction to be from a Rommell base. He grabbed his binoculars and looked through them. A moment later, the ships were close enough for him to make out the color of their nose patches. They were green and the lead ship had a bright red stripe running along the leading edge of the wing. Jack let out a whoop of delighted relief and snapped on his transmitter.

"Hi, Fancy Pants," he shouted into his microphone. "I never thought the day would come when I was glad to see you—but it has. Hang around for a while and give me some cover, will you? Rommell is operating off the reservation and some of his boys seem to want my hide."

He switched over to receive and waited. A second later the air foreman growled a reply. "Get back to Largos and land at once! That's an order."

"But you already gave me an order to haul a couple of crates to Lanares. What are you trying to pull off, anyway? You send me off on what's supposed to be a routine mission and the first thing I know I'm all tangled up in a small-sized shooting war. This isn't any thousand credit job!"

"I never gave you any such order," barked Hawkins' voice from the speaker.

"The hell you didn't," snapped Jack. "I've got an operational memo right

here in my pocket with your signature on it."

"Then somebody forged it. Now stop arguing and get back to Largos."

Jack grumbled, shrugged, and then swung the Hydra around in a great half circle. Just as he did so the six M and S ships came whistling by and zoomed up in a steep climb. As they slowed, their gliding wings came slowly out and soon they were all wheeling slowly three thousand feet above him. Jack swung around and looked angrily at the little figure who was strapped in the seat behind him. She was going to have a lot of explaining to do when she finally recovered consciousness. As he scowled at her, she let out a little moan and her eyelids quivered. He reached back with one arm, grabbed her by the front of her baggy flying suit, and shook her roughly. "All right," he barked. "Snap out of it!"

HER EYES slowly opened and she looked at him with a dazed expression on her face. "What happened?" she muttered. "Where are we?"

"The answer to the first is that you got creased—to the second, that we're on our way back to Largos to return those crates to whomever you swiped them from. And now I want some answers—start talking!"

She shook her head to clear it and then looked over his shoulder. Her face went white when she saw the town dead ahead. "No," she whispered, "You can't; you don't know what you're doing."

"You can say that again," he said sharply. "I've been running blind ever since I ~~got~~ pulled out of bed last night. And I'm getting tired of it. I told you to start talking!"

"There isn't time," she said desperately. "Please, Jack, get out of here while you still can!"

"I couldn't if I wanted to," he said brusquely, jerking his thumb in the

direction of the covering M and S planes, "and I don't want to. I'm in trouble enough now. Any more funny business and Hawkins will turn me over to the Commies with a recommendation that they revoke my combat license. And knowing Fancy Pants, I know he'd just love a chance like that."

"So they're in on it too," she said.

"Who's in on what?"

"Marshall and Smith. I knew Rommell was in on the deal, but we didn't know that you people were."

"In on what deal?" said Jack in exasperation. She was finally talking but it wasn't making any sense. "What are you talking about, anyway?"

"What do you think M and S planes are doing on the wrong side of the border, protecting a Spanish Government installation?"

"Why..." Jack stammered to a stop. Now that he thought about it, it didn't make much sense. If there was any defending to do, it was Rommell's job; they had the Spanish contract. "I don't know," he admitted finally, "but it's none of my business. I'm just a hired hand."

"Would you think it was your business if I told you that Spain was about to take off on the glory road?"

"What?"

"She has big ideas. She's thinking how every other country in the world would make a nice province."

Jack's booming laughter filled the cramped cockpit. "She can start any time she wants—but there are twenty contractors as big as M and S and Rommell combined who would make a nice little thing out of stopping her. France, for example, could hire six men for every one that Spain could afford."

"For the first time numbers don't make any difference. Not with what the Spanish have now!" There was a long silence and then she added quietly. "They've got atomic energy. The

first two packages of concentrated hell to come off the production line of that plant down there are in your bomb bay now."

"What!"

"There's an atomic bomb in each of those crates."

JACK STARED back at her with an incredulous expression on his face. "You're crazy. Every big contractor in the world has tried his hand at producing one at one time or another; it was always a waste of time and energy."

"No contractor can afford the capital investment that is required. But a country could—even a country as poor as Spain."

"But what's the point?" he said. "Governments have no use for weapons. That's contractor's business!"

"Not any more it isn't. When that plant down there gets in full production, military contractors will be as obsolete as knights in armor. With the monopoly they'll have, and Rommell and M and S converted into the nucleus of a national army, there won't be a company or a contractor that can stand up against them. They had a world empire once, and they haven't forgotten. The scrap with Portugal was deliberately set up to give them a chance to demonstrate to the world what they are able to do when they want to. And if none of this has any effect on you, you might be moved by the news that one of the babies you have in your bomb bay was scheduled to be dropped on Lisbon tomorrow night."

O'Hara let out a long low whistle and tried to restore some order to his thinking. Too much was happening in too short a time, and the girl's story was too fantastic. An atomic bomb was fine material for the Sunday magazine sections but— Still, what was Hawkins doing riding herd on him so deep in enemy territory? He had to be sure and there was one quick way to find out.

He switched on his transmitter and called upstairs. "Hey, Fancy Pants."

"Yeah?" came the answer in a moment.

"There's something about this deal that stinks. I think it might be a good idea if we all headed back for base and dumped the whole thing in the lap of the Commies. If they want to send those crates back to the Spanish, O. K., but I think it might be a good idea to let them make the decision." He banked the Hydra gently until his nose was pointing toward the west and waited to see what would happen.

The result was instantaneous. "Get back on course!" shouted Hawkins.

"And if I don't?"

"We'll blow you out of the sky."

"Looks like you're top dog, Fancy Pants," said Jack as he obediently turned back in the direction of the strip that was now only two miles away. "But just as a matter of curiosity, how come you and your boys are working for the Spanish? I was sort of under the impression that M and S had signed a contract with the Portuguese."

"You aren't paid to have impressions; you just do what you're told and don't talk back."

Jack didn't reply. He just reached forward and switched off his radio. "Looks like you were right," he said to the girl behind him. "You got a full drum in that Gatling?"

She nodded.

"Then let's see if you can do something with it this time beside make noise." He reached for the wing retractor control. As he jerked it back to *Emergency In* he shouted, "By the way, kid, if I don't see you again on this side, it's been nice knowing you." With that he jerked savagely back on the stick and hit the igniters on one of his two remaining banks of rockets.

THERE WAS a quiet peace to the Hydra's slow circling within the great cloud that hung directly over

Largos, but death waited outside in the bright sunshine where Hawkins and his five ships soared on long wings, waiting for Jack to come out.

"How long have we been in now?" asked the girl quietly.

"About five minutes."

"How much longer are we good for?"

"As long as the cloud lasts," he said. "There are always updrafts at the top of a cumulus; we can keep riding them indefinitely."

"And the others?"

"They're outside waiting for us. And six to one isn't good odds. Those boys are good—even Fancy Pants—M and S wouldn't bide them if they weren't. In fact, it'll probably be twenty to one before too long. I've got a hunch that Hawkins radioed to Rommell to send every available plane."

She looked out into the grey nothingness that surrounded the slowly wheeling ship. "But we can't stay here forever; we've got to get to Lanares."

"Any suggestions as to how that is to be done? Once we stick our nose outside this cover we're going to get clobbered—but good!"

He sat waiting for her answer. When she didn't, he asked, "What's the big attraction in Lanares? There are half a dozen free ports closer."

"Our men are there," she said briefly. "Once they have one of those atomic bombs we're carrying for evidence, they'll be able to stop both Rommell and the Spanish Government in a hurry."

"Who is this *we* you keep talking about? The *we* that forged Hawkins signature to that order slip? The *we* that highjacked the first two bombs that came off the assembly line? The *we* that's waiting for us in Lanares?"

Instead of answering she reached in her pocket and pulled out a worn leather case. She flipped it open and passed it over to him. He looked at it curiously, blinked, and then looked again. He gave a low whistle. "Combat

Control Commission! Why didn't you tell me you were a Commie in the first place?"

She gave a tired grin. "And if I had, what would you have done?"

It was his turn to grin. His was a sheepish, embarrassed one. "Gone back to bed, I guess; the farther I can stay away from the Commies—present company expected, of course—the better I like it. Everytime I see a CCC agent it means a fine for something or other."

"Not this time. You'll get your mileage—and your bonus. And our apologies, of course. This had to be a one man job. The CCC doesn't have any combat ships, and it doesn't have pilots like you; we had to have somebody, so you got elected."

A thinning of the whiteness ahead told Jack that he was almost at the edge of the cloud; he banked sharply and swung back to safety. Keeping the Hydra concealed was a tricky job—the whole top of the cloud was a turbulent series of updrafts that threatened momentarily to throw the ship up and out of its protective blanket. He had been forced to retract the wings to reduce the lift to the point where it just balanced the weight of the plane.

"If, and when," he said, "and just between the two of us I don't see how we're ever going to break out of here alive—anyway, if and when we ever get to Lanares, what then?"

"Now that we have concrete evidence, we can appeal to the World Council for action."

"And if they take any, Spain would promptly veto it, claiming that it was unwarranted infringement in her internal affairs. What then?"

She ran her fingers through her close cropped hair. "Well," she said thoughtfully, "I suppose the next step would be to appoint an investigating commission to see whether or not the veto was legitimate."

Jack snorted. "And how long would that take?"

"About a month, I suppose. But then if it were discovered that Spain was engaged in any illegal activity, and she refused to stop it, the Council would advertise for bids for a punitive force to intervene and take necessary action. Once we got to that stage there wouldn't be any trouble. Rommell and M and S wouldn't dare resist; there would be a mass revocation of licenses if they did."

JACK SNORTED again. "And what's the factory down there going to be doing while all this is going on? You don't have to answer, because you know the answer as well as I do. The whole plant will be working twenty-four hours a day turning out atomic bombs while the diplomats are having a ball arguing the case. A month of leeway would give the Spanish enough time to produce enough bombs to take care of every major city in the world. Before the Council ever gets around to advertising for a military contractor, the Spanish will let loose with an ultimatum that will stop everything cold."

She looked at him uncertainly. "We expected some delay, but we hoped the Spanish government would listen to reason once they realized what kind of evidence we had against them."

Jack gave a short bark of a laugh. "In the first place, they already know that the cat is out of the bag; that's why our hungry friends are waiting for us outside. And in the second—" he tilted the nose of the Hydra down in order to glide out of an updraft that threatened to lift the ship up into the bright morning sunshine where Hawkins and his men were waiting—"and in the second, we aren't about to get to Lanares to give the Commission the evidence it needs. As long as we stay in this cloud we're safe; but once we stick our nose outside we're going to

get blown out of the air. We can't stay up here forever, you know. Give me a while to think about it, will you?"

The girl behind him started to protest and then shut up as she realized the hopelessness of their situation.

"Got it!" Jack bared his teeth in an ugly grin. "Is there any way you can arm one of those bombs?"

"I should be able to. I helped design them. But they're stowed away in the bomb bay. We'd have to land before I could get at them. Under the circumstances that doesn't seem practical."

"There's another way. See that curved metal plate right between your feet?"

She looked down. "The one with the wing nut at each corner?"

"Right. Loosen the nuts, slide the plate back, and you'll find an emergency entrance to the bomb bay. Once you've got it open, here's what you're to do..."

6



FIVE MINUTES went by before the girl finally tapped Jack on the shoulder. "It's armed," she said in a tight voice.

The pilot nodded and switched on his communication set.

"Hawkins? This is O'Hara."

The answer came at once. "What's the matter, getting hungry for a little sunshine?" There was a jeering quality to the air foreman's voice. "There's lots of it out here."

"I know," said Jack quietly. "I'm coming out to get some."

"Fine, you'll have lots of company. Twenty Rommell ships pulled in a couple of minutes ago to help escort you in for a landing. We were going to



come in after you, but this makes it easier."

"Just one little thing." O'Hara paused for emphasis. "You know what I have in my bomb bay, don't you?"

"Hell, yes; what do you think all the fuss is about?"

"I've managed to arm one of them. You might pass the word along that the first time somebody comes in on me, I'm going to set it off."

There was a strangled squawk from the speaker. The theoretical specifications for an atomic bomb had been kicking around for years, and most of the professionals were familiar with them. "You're crazy!" said Hawkins.

"Sure I am. But since I'm going to get it one way or the other, I might as well make it spectacular."

Without waiting for an answer he pulled in his wings, kicked on his last bank of rockets, and came roaring out of the cloud. "Remember," he shouted into his microphone, "one shot and I'm off—and every mother's son of you goes with me!"

There were brave men in twenty-six rocket gliders that rode the updrafts above the great cumulus cloud, but they were also professionals. They fought for pay and the fun of it, but

it was more fun if one lived to spend one's pay. They all expected to die some day—death rode beside them every time they went into combat—but they all sat silently and watched as the Hydra climbed away from them into the high thin air. No bonus was big enough to cause a man to deliberately commit suicide.

The Hydra streaked over the sprawling factory at thirty thousand feet. It slowed momentarily from the increased drag as the bomb bay door opened and a long crate tumbled out, and then lightened, lept ahead as it closed again. Down the crate curved, in a long parabola, and then suddenly slowed as the ribbon chute that had been fastened to it snapped open and blossomed above it like a huge thistledown.

The Hydra was shielded behind the first range of mountains when a bursting sun flare flashed up behind them. They sat and watched as a mushroom shaped cloud slowly climbed until it was as high as they were, and then Jack said in a shaky voice, "If it's all right with you, I think we'd better get on toward Lanares."

He hoped the others—even Hawkins—had been far enough away to escape. A man should have some control over the way of his death. If he went down in combat, at least he had come into it of his own free will knowing the chance he was taking. But this—this was something no man had a right to hurl against another. He shook his head as if to clear it of its ugly thoughts and concentrated on getting his wings out.

THE FREE PORT of Lanares could be seen far in the distance when Jack relaxed at last and stopped worrying about the next updraft. He had enough free air underneath so that a flat glide would take him in easily. He turned and said to his gunner in a tired voice, "Nobody can say it hasn't been a busy day, but it looks like we finally made it. That's Lanares up ahead;

we're only about ten minutes out."

She was staring blindly at the floor. There were tears in her eyes. "I keep thinking what happened back there," she said in a dead voice. "I don't think I'll ever be able to sleep again. There were people down there, innocent people."

"You couldn't help it. It had to be done."

"I *could* help it," she said bitterly. "I helped design that hell bomb." Her voice trailed off.

"Go ahead."

"I'm a physicist, a nuclear physicist and a good one. The only thing I cared anything about was my work, and when the Spanish Government offered me a problem and unlimited funds for research I couldn't resist. It wasn't until my part was finished, and the production machinery was already being installed, that the implications of what I had helped create slowly began to dawn on me—that what had been for me an engrossing problem was actually a weapon that was to be used against people."

"I had to run away—they wouldn't let me quit. The mountains are no place for a person who doesn't know them, and I was half dead when I was picked up by a band of Republican guerrillas."

Jack looked puzzled. "Guerrillas? What kind of guerrillas?"

"Republican, political refugees from the present regime. They have a few guns and a lot of tenacity."

"Civilians have no business with guns. If they want to fight, let them go hire a company the way everybody else does!"

"They did; that's why they're refugees. Eighty percent of the population were for the Republican government; but the other side had the money and were able to hire twice as big a force."

Jack's face cleared. "I remember now, but that's ancient history."

"Not for the Republicans, it isn't."



"What happened was their own fault; that Russian outfit they hired couldn't punch its way out of a paper bag."

"It was all they could afford. That's the trouble with the whole mercenary system. The rights or wrongs have nothing to do with the conclusion of a dispute; it's the side that can afford to hire the best in men and equipment that usually comes out on top."

Jack started to bristle. "At least the civilians don't have to fight, and their cities aren't bothered."

"Switch to the past tense," snapped the girl. "Remember what happened today?"

He didn't press the point. "Go ahead."

"The Republicans got me out of the country and I went to the Combat Control Commission. They're a decent bunch, but the companies have never let them have any real power. The Commission was set up by the World Council to keep order in the industry. But all that they can do is to send ground observers and a few recon planes into a designated area to try and catch any violations of the particular combat agreement the companies concerned are operating under."

"Damn sneaks," growled Jack. "I

got socked a five hundred credit fine last job I was on just because I took off a few minutes before the official zero hour." He caught himself and motioned her to continue.

"THE COMMISSION didn't dare to complain to the World Council until they had something concrete in the way of evidence; once the matter was made public, Spain's hand would have been forced. So somebody had to get in there and come out with an actual bomb. The Spanish Republicans were only too eager to cooperate and a raid was arranged. Since the success of the whole plan depended on surprise, we decided that a single plane would have a better chance to get through than several. The job then was to find a really good combat pilot. All the best ones were under contract, and time was so short that we had to resort to a certain amount of trickery. So we did." She looked at him solemnly. "My apologies, Mr. O'Hara; I'm afraid we cost you your job."

He yawned and stretched. "Right now I'm too tired to worry about it. What's the next step? Is the Commission going to try to get the Council to outlaw the companies?"

"They'd like to—but if it came to a showdown, the chances are that the companies would outlaw the Council." She sighed. "Let's face it, Jack. Until we get a real world government instead of an international debating society, we're going to have countries squabbling over territories and special concessions like a lot of greedy kids. The companies are the only answer we have so far. At least, only a few thousand men are involved on each side and the fighting is restricted to a small area so no civilians get hurt."

"I think you've overlooked something," said Jack thoughtfully as he dipped down toward the long runway that lay only a half a mile ahead. "You've scotched one snake, but there are going to be others. Now that it is

known that an atom bomb is practical, there will be other countries trying to follow Spain's example; and much as I hate to admit it about my own profession, other companies to throw in with them."

"Not with what we've got in the bomb bay," she said grimly. "The Control Commission is going to have teeth for a change. We're going to get together a force of the best combat pilots and the best planes we can get our hands on, and the first company or country that starts playing around with atomic energy is going to get it the way Largos did." She stamped one foot down on the emergency hatch that opened into the bomb bay where the second bomb rested. "With this baby hanging over their heads, I've got a hunch they'll never dare try."

As the runway came slowly up to meet them, Jack dropped his landing gear. A moment later the wheels touched smoothly and the Hydra rolled toward a small knot of excited men who wore the brown uniforms of the Combat Control Commission.

"By the way," the girl said casually, "the Commission could use a man like you."

He didn't look around. "That's interesting."

Two little arms suddenly hugged him around the neck and a pair of soft lips brushed one tanned cheek. "I could, too," she whispered. "Come around tonight and we'll see if we can work out a contract."

"Sub-contract," said O'Hara gruffly. "I'm an independent operator. I work my own time and according to my own judgement."

There was an impish look in her eyes as her arms closed tighter about him. "We'll go into that later," she purred.

Jack had a sudden premonition that for the first time in his life he was about to meet his match.

He was right.

The fortress was falling to pieces, yet no one—the commander or the inspector—seemed to notice, let alone care. Yet, when Bayliss had repairs made, the commander was terribly upset. Why?

FORT IRON

by MARGARET ST. CLAIR

Illustrated by

EMSH

HOW LONG was it since anybody had fought here? The wars were long over. There were ridges in the sand that the men said meant burial mounds, but nobody knew whose bones were buried in them. There was the fort, the stinging cold—frost in the morning—the wind full of sand. Nothing else. Why had the fort been built here? What was there to defend?

Bayliss had accepted his transfer eagerly. It had meant a promotion, more privileges, better pay. Now, after a couple of months in his new post he wondered almost guiltily why he had been selected for it. Had he been kicked upstairs? No, kicked sideways—out of usual and familiar things, the basically trustworthy, into this ambiguous place. He was too easy-going; he had always known that.

The CO was an elderly man, old at sixty; he rarely left his quarters. Most of the duties of the fort devolved on Bayliss as the only other commissioned officer. He spent much of his time in one of the gun embrasures, sweeping the sand with his field-glasses and listening, with tepid curiosity, to the voices of the enlisted men as they floated up the stair. They did not talk much. Mainly they played Acey-trois or shot dice. There were none of the arguments, factual or personal, that enlisted men

usually got into. It struck Bayliss as odd, even for Fort Iron, that they did not talk.

Once he overheard a discussion about leave. They spoke about it not as something desirable and denied, but as if it belonged to the inconceivable. One of the men—Williams, Bayliss thought—said, in the tone of one delivering a clincher, "But where would you get leave to? There isn't any place but this."

Bayliss had felt a sort of vertigo at the words. Did Williams actually mean that the world, except the sand, the cold, the high plateau, had ceased to exist? He tried to remember the name of the place where Fort Iron was, couldn't, and grew frightened. At last it came to him: Han-hai, Chinese words meaning "the dry sea". But after that Bayliss tried not to listen to the men when they talked.

When he had been at the fort six or seven months, the CO called him into his office. Colonel Price was holding a blue official flimsy between thumb and third finger. "We're to have an inspector from the Adjutant General's office visit us, Major Bayliss," he said without looking up. "He'll be here overnight—see that the mess sergeant plans a special menu—and we'll have a dress parade for him. The men's uniforms



The inspector didn't seem to notice the cracks at all.

must be sponged and pressed, and our flags mended. I imagine some of them have become a little torn. Oh, and don't forget to see that the men's guns and pig-stickers are properly polished."

"Yes, sir," Bayliss answered. He had turned a dull red. The orders Colonel Price had given him were both insulting—and since those were points to which the most slovenly officer would have attended automatically—and fantastic. Mend flags? A fort in which the flags were allowed to become tattered? But

perhaps they were banners with some sentimental battle interest. He cleared his throat.

"I noticed some cracks in the masonry around number two gun embrasure this morning, sir," he said. "Shall I have the men mix concrete and plaster them up?"

The answer must, of course, be yes. Colonel Price raised his eyes from his desk blotter and gave Bayliss a sharp almost alarmed look "No, just the things I've told you. The uniforms, the

flags, the food; there's no need to disturb the walls of the fort."

"Yes, sir." Bayliss saluted and went out. He felt confused, angry, and afraid. After a moment his mental balance came back, and he managed to laugh. Colonel Price had been at the fort a long time; he was an old man. He didn't want what he was used to disturbed. But the inspector from the AG's office would be a different matter; things would be straightened out when he came.

IN THE WEEK before the inspector arrived, Bayliss found himself looking at the fort with new eyes. Inefficiencies and lapses he'd glossed over before seemed to start out at him. The wall around the parade ground, for instance, had lost its frieze of points in five or six places; they'd rusted away and not been replaced. Number two gun embrasure was not the only one with cracks. Drill was a little sloppy; and so on. He'd been too easy-going, as usual, too slack. Price was old, but that was no excuse for Bayliss himself.

Price had indicated that he didn't want the fort itself repaired, but he surely wouldn't object to the men being smarter and more military. Bayliss decided that he'd put them through a group of setting-up exercises in the afternoons, and try to get them to go through the manual with more precision and snap in the mornings. The men all looked a little soft and out of condition. Exercises, in time, would correct that.

Around five in the afternoon of the fourth day Bayliss realized that he'd omitted today's exercises. He was unpleasantly startled at this new evidence of his slackness. He started to call the sergeant, to have the men turn out for their quota of push-ups and lap-downs, and then halted. The afternoon was bitterly cold; the wind blew sand against the fort's walls with a long eroding sough. He'd have difficulty

making his commands heard in the stinging air. The men wouldn't be able to move fast enough to keep warm. Let it go, let it go. —He'd have them drill twice as hard in the morning to make up for it.

He walked around the parapet to an embrasure on the sheltered side. Through the sand-filled air, the gray flat plain was dimly visible as it stretched out toward the gray horizon. Bayliss thought he had never seen a prospect so sorrowful, so desolate. No wonder that drill was sloppy and exercises left out; under the pressure of this sadly hostile environment, only what was most necessary would survive.

Now, none of that; that was no way for him to feel. He'd be getting as bad as Price if he didn't watch himself.

The AG's man arrived late on the afternoon of the 24th, in a slow-moving dirigible. Bayliss, watching the thing's painful attempts to land in the face of the wind, wondered what the army must have been like a century ago, when big fast planes were everywhere. Now there wasn't the fuel for anything more refined than a diesel engine. The power was gone.

DINNER that night was a full-dress affair, with delicacies out of tins that the mess sergeant must have hoarded for a dozen years. The AG's representative was small and affable, bald-headed, his chest adorned with ribbons of theatres Bayliss could only partly identify. He told jokes between courses; he praised everything.

They had parade drill in the morning. Bayliss was ashamed at the shabby uniforms, the mended flags; the only thing that pleased him was that the drill itself was carried out smartly. But the AG's man seemed to notice nothing amiss. Bayliss would look at at him and then look away again, chewing his lip.

They had lunch. In the afternoon Price went to his quarters and Bayliss was charged with showing the inspector

the fort. It was an opportunity; eagerly he accepted it.

He had agreed with himself that he would not deliberately call the inspector's attention to the cracking wall, the broken frieze, the heap of all-too-scalable ash cans outside the palisade. Neither would he attempt to conceal anything from him. But as the tour proceeded and the visitor ignored one evidence of neglect after another, Bayliss' resolution weakened.

When they came to the gun embrasure with the deep cracks, he called the inspector into it. "Look out that way, sir," he said, pointing. "Do you see that mound on the horizon? The men say it's full of bones from one of the wars. I thought you might find it interesting."

The little man leaned forward, following the direction of Bayliss' finger, bracing himself against the ledge. What Bayliss had scarcely dared to hope for happened. There was a cracking noise and then a large piece of masonry broke from the embrasure. It fell outward. It must have weighed ten or twelve pounds; it hit the sand below with a thud.

He couldn't ignore that, Bayliss thought with a flash of triumph.

The Adjutant General's man drew back. "Yes, it is an interesting sight," he said.

Bayliss lost control of himself. "But, sir!" he said in a breaking voice. "Sir, excuse me. But the fort—do you think everything's all right?"

The little man smiled, "Take it easy, my boy," he said. He twinkled. "You're all right; the fort's all right." He reached up and clapped Bayliss on the shoulder encouragingly. "Yes."

The dirigible came for him about four that afternoon. For the next day Bayliss went about feeling sick and dizzy. The hole in the embrasure remained unmended, and every time he went past it the unexpected winking of light where there should have been solid stone startled him.

On the sixth day he could stand it no longer. He called the sergeant and told him to have a couple of the men mix cement and put the broken out piece of masonry back in the hole.

"Yessir," said the sergeant. He hesitated. "Excuse me, sir; but does Colonel Price know about this?"

"No," Bayliss answered. His jaw set. "I'll take the responsibility; hurry up with it."

"Yessir," the sergeant said.

THE MEN were maddeningly slow about the job; what should have taken twenty minutes stretched out to an hour. Finally Bayliss went and stood by them, and under the stimulus of his gaze they finished with an effect of haste. He had them plaster up the other cracks he had noticed. If he could have thought of anything to take the place of the rusted metal he would have had them repair the broken parts of the parade ground frieze. Perhaps he would be able to improvise something later.

He dismissed the men. They went away, carrying the bucket of cement and their trowels. Bayliss regarded the repairs with somewhat apprehensive satisfaction. He didn't know what Price would do or say; but the CO was hardly likely to have the replaced masonry knocked out again, the repaired cracks opened up. Bayliss had accomplished that much.

Colonel Price noticed the repairs next morning, when he was out on the parapet. His eyes widened; he fingered the lapels of his narrow gray collar. "Did you order that done?" he asked Bayliss.

"Yes, sir." He repressed a tendency to add explanation and apology.

"You shouldn't have done that." Price coughed. "This was a quiet sector," he said mournfully. "I wanted it to remain one—sometimes, in a long struggle, the first party to attack loses. You are not to do anything more; nothing more."

He turned his back on Bayliss and went shakily through the door and toward his own quarters.

Major Bayliss stared after him, his heart thumping. The mild rebuke had alarmed him more than anger or punishment would have. What had Price meant when he spoke of a long struggle, a quiet sector, an attack? What enemy was there? Bayliss had spent nearly nine months at the fort. There had never been a sign of enemy activity; there had never been any activity at all, except that of wind and sand.

An enemy; an attack. Price had spoken almost as if Bayliss' having repaired the breach in the wall, the cracks, would somehow count as an attack against an invisible enemy. But even if one granted that there *was* an enemy, how could repairing the fort constitute a threat to him? Price was getting old; this must be an example of senility.

For a moment Bayliss felt comforted. Then he remembered the AG's man; he hadn't been senile. And what was it he had said? "You're all right. The fort's all right." He had refused to notice anything.

Bayliss felt so dizzy that he leaned up against the wall for support. Words—conspiracy, treachery, *b e t r a y a l*—were ringing through his mind cloudily. Had he been sent to the fort because he seemed a good-natured, complaisant officer who could be relied upon not to notice anything? So easy-going that he didn't need to be bothered about?

Then common sense returned. No, there was no treachery. Price and the AG's man were honest, were what they appeared to be. No matter how many questions it left unanswered, he knew that.

THE NEXT two days passed slowly;

Bayliss felt anxious and depressed. The weather had turned cold and windless, achingly cold, and every night hard frost.

It was when he went out on the par-

apet after breakfast that he noticed the patch. The place where he had the masonry replaced had been conspicuous by its rimming of lighter, unweathered concrete. Now the whole region around the replacement, as well as the replaced fragment of masonry itself, had turned an odd, coruscating white.

He examined it carefully, not alarmed at first. The new material was glossy dense and hard, with a surface more like that of enamel than that of concrete. He scratched it with his fingernail and had his impression of its glassiness confirmed. He thumped it lightly; it was so hard his finger hurt.

What could the material be? There was nothing in the fort storeroom that was anything like this. He leaned out over the embrasure, looking down at the outside. There, too, was a big patch of the hard, coruscating material; it went clear through the wall.

It must be some chemical change, a reaction between the old masonry and the new cement. But none of the other cracks he had had the men fill in showed the same change. A difference in the wall at this point? In the wind? In the sand?

Bayliss was suddenly too alarmed to try to reason with himself any longer. He straightened, turned, and almost at a run went toward Price's door.

The CO gathered, through Bayliss' confusion of explanations, an impression of urgency. He followed him out on the parapet quickly. When he rose from examining the patch Bayliss' shaking finger indicated, his face was white.

"I was afraid they'd take your repairs as an aggression," he said sadly. "Oh, dear; this looks like a counter-attack."

"But sir, how can it be an attack?" Bayliss demanded. The words came tumbling out. "It's stronger than my work—stronger than what it replaced. How can repairing something be an attack?"

"Oh, to replace our work with

their fabric, with what's theirs, friendly to them...don't you see, Major Bayliss? That's a way of taking over things." He fingered his lips uncertainly. "I shall have to try to think of something," he said.

"I beg your pardon, sir," Bayliss said. "But who—what—what is the enemy? What sort of thing?"

"We don't know," Colonel Price said.

He straightened a little, so he was fully erect, and Bayliss realized what a tall man he was. "For a long time we've been conscious of pressure. The fort's, in a sense, on mandated territory. We had an agent, a girl, who used to come in and report at intervals. She hasn't been in for a long time. I suppose they—that she won't be back.

"I shall have to try to think of something now," he repeated. He looked at Bayliss, not accusingly, but so sadly that the younger man felt a throb of guilt. Then he went back to his office.

THAT NIGHT Bayliss lay shivering under his rough brown blankets. The wind had come up, and though all the openings in his room were closed, the air was full of pressure from the storm outside. In the morning, sand would be sifted over his pillow.

He thought of the sentries walking the wall in the wind, and was sorry for them. Their eyes would be sand-strung and sore when they went off duty. —What use was it to post sentries when an enemy attacked by strengthening the weak spots in your wall? Invisible, incalculable. You might as well fight sand and wind.

Toward morning he slept. He had shaved and was standing beside his shaving mirror drinking a cup of coffee when sergeant Mills came in.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, "but Colonel Price—I'm afraid he's pretty bad."

Bayliss put his cup down and followed him. There was no regular medical officer at Fort Iron. Bayliss had, so he understood, been sent to the fort

partly because he had had two years' medical training before he entered the army. But it took no medical training at all to see, this morning, that Sergeant Mills was understating the case. Colonel Price was not pretty bad; Colonel Price was dead.

Bayliss laid the cold wrist down gently. "Did he ever have trouble with his heart?" he asked the sergeant.

"Yessir. He took pills for it all the time."

Bayliss sighed deeply. It might have been with relief. "It could be heart failure," he said musingly. "...Have Bates crank the dynamo and radio Fort McKee. He's to tell them that Colonel Price is dead; that it looks like heart failure; but that I want them to send a qualified doctor to be sure. Sign it Bayliss, acting CO. After that's sent, I want regional HQ notified. Just the fact of Price's death, and a request for instructions. Signed the same."

"Yessir." Mill saluted and went out.

Bayliss remained gazing down at Price. The body looked long and thin and worn-out; and though Price was dead he didn't look peaceful. He looked as if he'd died trying, if not fighting. Perhaps he'd been "trying to think of something" when he died.

...Had it been a natural death? Oh, it must have. Must have. But an enemy that could replace—transmute—rough masonry all unperceived into an alien glassiness could stop an old man's heart beating in the night. It would be as easy as putting out your finger and stopping the pendulum of a ticking clock.

THE ANSWER from Fort McKee came a little before eleven. "*No qualified doctor available,*" Bayliss read. "*Confident your diagnosis is correct. Carry on.*"

He put the flimsy down with a sigh. He wished they could have sent somebody. He picked up the other paper Bates had brought in, from regional HQ, and read it.

You are herby confirmed in your position of CO of Fort Iron. Official documentary confirmation will follow. If you need a junior officer to help you with the duties of the fort, apply for one. Your request will be given due consideration.

Examination of Price's dossier shows that he left no survivors. He expressed a wish to be buried at the fort. You are to comply with his request. Mikelson, CO regional HQ.

Bayliss went over to the window and looked out. Mills, on the parade ground below, was drilling the men. They drilled pretty well, Bayliss thought; they were much more snappy than they had been a couple of months ago. —His head was beginning to ache. He was the fort's commanding officer now.

Why hadn't Price confided in him more? The older man must have known he was in poor health and that Bayliss was likely to succeed him. But he had kept whatever he knew to himself. He hadn't even given Bayliss a hint of what the danger was.

Perhaps he hadn't known what the danger was.

Bayliss realized with sudden insight why Price had looked worn and old. A struggle in which danger might be everywhere—or nowhere—in which one must be perpetually on the alert, and yet be careful never to aggress—a struggle which might, after all, have no objective existence, so that one would come in time to doubt the validity of one's sense impressions—yes, there was reason to be worn and old. And now the struggle had passed to him, Bayliss. He was the fort's new CO.

They buried Price close under the wall of the parade ground. After he was buried, Bayliss found he couldn't stop thinking about him. He missed the older man surprisingly, considering how limited their social contacts had been, and he used to lie awake nights

under his blankets thinking about how cold it must be outside and wondering how Price had felt in that instant when his heart stopped. Sometimes he used to wonder if a hand would reach in through the wall of his chest and hold his own heart tightly, ignoring its plunges, until it quieted. When he got to that point in speculation, he would get up and take a sleeping tablet. They usually worked.

Inactivity, tension and boredom told on him. The official confirmation of his new status came from HQ, and he sent in a request for a junior officer. He didn't expect to get action on the request for a long time. Every morning he would examine the patch of glassy whitish stuff; it didn't seem to be enlarging, anyway.

There came a week of roaring wind. It was the worst storm he had seen in his nearly twelve months at the fort. Morning after morning he was surprised that there was still a roof above their head. Daylight was a lurid yellowish-gray, and there was sand everywhere, even in the food he ate.

WHEN THE storm died away and the sky took on its customary pale slate blue again, Bayliss saw that two other gun embrasure bore deep cracks.

He'd call the sergeant and have the men repair the cracks. At this rate the fort would be a pile of rubble in ten years. Or—would the enemy take his repairing the wind damage as another attack?

Bayliss was suddenly sick, sick to overflowing, of calculations based on the possible reaction of an unseen, unreal enemy. Without reflection he called Sgt. Mills and told him to get the fort's one tank ready and out.

"I'll take four men," he said, "a regular crew. Have any of the men had tank work?"

"Yessir," Mills responded. His eyes were gleaming. "Not for several years, though, sir."

"That doesn't matter. Have them

take their stations as soon as you can. I'll pilot the tank."

Bayliss had seen the tank only once or twice while he had been at the fort. As the garage doors opened and the big flat machine came rolling out he was impressed with how well kept-up it was. Pfc. Wahr, who was driving, caught his eye and grinned. "Looks good, don't she, sir?" he said a little proudly; "I've taken care of her."

Bayliss got into the observer's place. He spoke to Sgt. Mills, who was acting as rear gunner. "How many rounds have we got?"

"Five hundred for each gun, sir."

"That ought to be plenty," Bayliss said.

The men looked excited and pleased. As the gates of the fort closed behind them Pfc. Wahr said, "Where to, sir?"

"Straight ahead until I tell you to turn," Bayliss replied.

The day was warm, for Fort Iron. As the sun rose higher, the slate gray of the sky gave place to a pale but definite blue. It was hot inside the tank, even with the ventilators open. Bayliss had the top opened and stood upright in the observer's tower, scanning the horizon with his glasses. He had a map in one hand.

The tank rolled on steadily. Once Wahr did things with levers and the speed increased, but Bayliss had to ask him to slow down again, for the vibration interfered with his observations. The fort was long out of sight.

Wahr gave a nervous cough. Bayliss, following the direction of his gaze, saw from the gauges that they had used more than a third of their gas supply. Once more he scanned the horizon. There was nothing except a far distant burial mound.

He'd better have Wahr turn back. What was he looking for, anyhow? What did he expect to find? Taking the tank out had been an impulse, born of frustration and anxiety. He'd swept the horizon one more time, and then go back.

Since they would be returning in a moment, he used the glasses with especial care. Gray. Flat. Gray. A long mound's furrow. —There was a spot of white off to the right.

He looked at it eagerly and unbelievably. A patch of salt? Salt would have glittered more in the sunlight. He couldn't think of anything else it might be. Why not find out? "Turn sharp right," he said.

The tank wheeled obediently. Sand hissed under the treads. Bayliss kept the white object in the glasses. It looked round, and beside it were other bars and lines of white. He was pretty sure what it was before the tank got up to it.

He had Wahr stop the treads. He jumped out. Yes, a skeleton. The round thing was the skull.

BONES, IN themselves, wouldn't have mattered. The recent storm might have rolled them out of one of the burial mounds. But these bones weren't old; there was still a little brown hair left on the skull.

They must have belonged to a woman, from the shape of the pelvis and their lightness and delicacy. Bayliss looked closer. Yes, a woman. There was a silver bangle around the thin bone of one wrist.

Price had spoken of an agent a girl. This must be she. She must have been on her way to the fort. . .

Bayliss called the men from the tank. "Bury her," he said.

It was difficult. The wind was coming up again, and they had nothing but their hands to use for digging. Bayliss, with the map for a scoop, tried to help.

At last they had her covered. It was shallow; the first high wind would leave her bare again. But she was covered for now.

The men got back in the tank. They waited expectantly. Bayliss stared around at the flat horizon, the shallow mound. A sudden fury rose in him. How long was the enemy to have it

all his own way? Price; the girl; the patch of alien stuff in the wall. Attack after attack.

He scrambled into the tank. Wahr and the gunners were looking at him. He closed the turret cover. "Fire through 360 degrees," he said to the men at the guns.

There was an instant's silence. Then the rattle and chatter of the three guns burst out. Each of them commanded a third of a circle. They were really laying it down, Bayliss thought.

"Proceed slowly back to the fort," he said to Wahr, who was sitting with his hands on the controls.

The tank began to move. Wahr made a wide, slewing turn. The tank gathered speed lurchingly and then, as Wahr remembered his instructions, slowed again. Bullets pocking and spattering from their guns on the sands around them, they moved slowly toward the fort.

When Bayliss had ordered the fire he had felt a momentary but intense relief. Now frustration rose in him chokingly once more. For an instant he longed to push Mills from the rear gun and fire it himself. But at whom would he fire it? It wouldn't do any good.

"Cease fire," he ordered in a loud, expressionless voice.

The gunfire stopped, with a final burst from Evans, who had the port gun. There was silence. The gunners looked at Bayliss and then away again. It was Mills who said, in a carefully neutral tone, "Colonel Price told me once he thought of taking the tank out. And shooting, sir."

So his predecessor had had the same idea, even if he hadn't acted on it. Bayliss put his hands over his eyes for a minute. "Yes," he said. "Wahr, revv her up a little. We might as well get on back."

ALL THE same, when they were back inside the fort Bayliss felt better. If there *was* an enemy—if he had any existence more real than as a patch of discoloration on masonry—



Bayliss had thrown down the gauntlet to him. The trip into the desert, the gunfire had been a challenge. The fighting with shadows might stop now. They would have to be on the alert.

He cut the hours of the men on sentry duty from four to three and doubled the number of sentries. He must run no risk of a surprise attack. He had the frieze of points around the parade ground replaced, the new cracks cemented neatly up. Nothing happened. The new repair work was not "replaced."

As the days passed, he became calmer. He was still on the alert, but his nerves were steadier. Most of the time he slept without needing sleeping pills.

He began to wonder why he had thought Fort Iron such an alien and ambiguous place. It wasn't in a beautiful situation, certainly, but there was something pleasing to the mind in the limitless expanse of sand around it, something pleasing to the eye in the subtle gradations of gray in sky and plain. Even the sand laden wind had lost its aching harshness. It seemed salty and stimulating now, able to invigorate.

When the notice came from regional HQ that his request for a junior officer had been denied, "*Due to lack of suitable personnel*," he was not distressed. An officer would have been rather a nuisance, really. He'd have had to be sociable with him. And nowadays he really preferred to be by himself.

One morning he rose early and came out on the parapet before breakfast. It

was a habit he'd gotten into lately. He noticed that the sentry saluted him stiffly, as if cold had made him sluggish. The man seemed to be shivering. How odd—Bayliss wasn't cold at all. It was a little blowy, perhaps, and the frost was still lying on the sand in patches. But it was a fine day.

He walked to his favorite embrasure, the one with the "replacement", and looked out. How beautiful the contrast between the gray and darker gray was, where the burial mound made a long shadow. From the looks of the sky, the wind would come up a bit before noon.

Idly he leaned down and began scratching at the smooth surface of the "replacement" with his fingernails. That was another habit he'd formed lately and, though he didn't know why, he found it oddly gratifying. It must be just the way it felt.

When he brought his hand up, he saw that the nails were dirty. That wouldn't do at all. In a fort like this, everything had to be kept neat and tidy. Frowning, he got out a pocket knife and began cleaning the soiled nails.

HE TIPPED his hand to catch the light better. There was a sudden gust, a burst, of wind, and sand rattled in his face. He started. The knife slipped, slid, and bit deeply into the ball of his thumb.

Oh, what a mess. He felt a sick annoyance at himself. There'd be blood, blood everywhere; he'd cut his thumb almost to the bone. The cut really ought to be stitched up, but he couldn't do it on himself. It would be sore for weeks, it would be a month before it healed. What a nuisance, what a mess.

What a mess a human being was. Anywhere you punctured him, there came out blood. He held his thumb tightly around the case to check the bleeding. And then it came to him with a start: but there wasn't any blood.

It should have been gushing out.

Blood on his hand, his cuff, his uniform, the floor. But all that was coming out was a little whitish frothy stuff.

His stomach felt frightened, but the rest of him was too surprised. He brought the thumb close to his eyes and peered at it. Just the white stuff. Delicately he parted the edges of the cut—but it didn't hurt—and peered into it.

It was a very deep cut. He saw the white, moist gleam of the bone at the bottom. The sides of the cut were rigid and glittered faintly. They didn't look much like flesh.

Animal instinct made him put his thumb to his lip. He tasted, not the warm salt rankness of blood, but something cool and sweet, like the nectar of a flower. It was an odd taste to be coming from human flesh.

But of course it wasn't human flesh.

Not any longer. For a moment he looked out across the prospect, enjoying the subtle chiming of gray against gray, before he went on with his thoughts.—He wasn't exactly a human being any longer. So naturally it wasn't quite human flesh.

He was being replaced. Just as the rough masonry of the embrasure had been replaced with a new material, alienly sparkling, glassy and hard, so his merely human tissue had been changed for flesh that couldn't be hurt and didn't bleed. By now the process must be almost finished.

It didn't seem to matter. The spark of fright he had felt when his finger hadn't bled had almost died away. And he'd feel much better when the change was complete.

He yawned. It was quite a good plan, really, much better than taking over the fort by replacing its substance with other material would have been. He was smiling faintly as he left the embrasure and went down to breakfast.

When an enemy has taken over the commander, it is easy to take over the fort.

"Entertainment"

WHEN YOU see quotations about a title, as in this case, they can mean various things. The word or phrase may be quoted from some source which will be identified, or which may be so well known that merely placing the quotes will do the trick; the quotation marks may be there for a kind of sarcastic intonation; or they may be there just to underline the fact that the word or phrase within the quotes has many possible levels of meaning, and that you shouldn't assume that the first one that comes into your mind is necessarily the one intended, or the only one possible.

Not only can "entertainment" mean many different things to as many different people, but it can mean a wide range of different things to the same person, depending upon the circumstances. If this seems so simple as to appear simple minded, let me assure you that it isn't; for proof of this, I need only direct your attention to the arguments that having been running for a long time among science fictionists on the subject of whether science fiction is, or should be, considered as just "entertainment" or should be a great deal more than that. Most of those whose opinions I have listened to, or read, have talked or written as if "entertainment" had only one meaning—the same meaning for everyone, all the time. And further, it would seem as if entertainment were a rather low-grade, thought-free occupation, too.

Mark Clifton, in an article in the May 1955 issue of *Inside* (published by Ron Smi, 510 West 113th St., Room 407, New York 25, New York; 25¢ per copy and well worth it) entitled, "But They Want to Write Them", is an exception. He notes, "Sure, I agree that a story should entertain—but whom? And on what level? *The Wizard of Oz* is superb entertainment—for a ten year old. And the most of us find entertainment in numerous levels, from the dirty story to the sublime contemplation of the universe. A man can find a vast entertainment in a math formula, if he is equipped to follow its reasoning." And

speaking of the extremely limited philosophy of those who maintain that fiction should be "pure entertainment", he continues, "...It implies that thinking cannot be considered entertaining. It implies that there is no difference between the science fiction reader and the western pulp reader. It implies that the human being cannot evolve an intellectual capacity beyond that of a ten year old. It implies that thinking is and must remain an onerous chore, to be escaped at the earliest opportunity...."

Brushing aside the objections that some ten year olds might not find the "Wizard of Oz" superb entertainment and persons much over ten—mature persons, as we put it loosely—can also enjoy this book; also passing over the objection that all western pulp stories must be and are, necessarily, on as low a level as Clifton's rhetoric implies, I agree with this. However, this brings me back to an expression I've often used in other editorials and editorial comments on readers' letters, where I've stated that my aim as a science fiction editor is to present "intelligent entertainment". Perhaps I haven't made it clear how I was using this phrase.

The bulk of these magazines is fiction, and the way I see it, the first requirement of fiction is to present an interesting story—that is, one which the editor believes will capture and hold the interest of the people who (he hopes) will buy and read the magazine, and after reading it look forward to the next issue.

Now we have two separate questions instead of one. First, what are the essentials for an interesting story? Can we define them in such a way that we won't have to explain innumerable exceptions, when examples are brought up, or have to pronounce that innumerable proven favorites were not interesting stories? (James Blish once noted, in an argument about standards of literary excellence, that any theory of such which begins by throwing time-proved masterpieces out the window is obviously suspect.) Second, what are the edi-

tor's assumptions about his readers' capacities and intellectual level? Obviously, in answering the second I question, I can only speak for one editor—myself.

FOR THE present milieu, it is a basic requirement that a story must start immediately and continue on, through its levels of interest and suspense, without a break until the end. In other words, there must be no intermissions, no sections where the curtain is rung down and the author steps in to deliver a lecture—be it scientific, religious, moral, political, or whatnot. The thread must not be broken. If it is, then you do not have a story; you have lectures and exhortations—propaganda, if you please—hung upon a narrative backdrop. This may be of intense interest to some readers, but its range of interest is too limited for our purposes, and does not belong within our confines of fiction.

Does this mean that a story cannot have ideas, or at least must not present scientific, political, etc., viewpoints and/or information? Of course not! It is a matter of story-writing technique, which Mark Clifton, for example, mastered in the novel, "They'd Rather Be Right", that he wrote in collaboration with Frank Riley. That story is jammed with science, psychology, politics, and various kinds of exhortation—but at no point do these impede with the story-line; at no time does the story come to a standstill while the authors make speeches.

Does this mean that, in science fiction, science must be subservient to plot, characterization, etc.? By no means, if by such subservience is meant that the science should just be a sort of background design to a plot which, with a few minor changes—or none at all—could be submitted to a western, sports, detective, etc., magazine? Science, etc., must, however, be presented in an interesting way; that is why numerous published stories are not interesting except to a small number of readers who have some knowledge of, and a great deal of interest in, the technical details expounded. But the thing that was wrong was not the presence of technical details; what was wrong was that the author failed to weave them into an interesting story.

Now "interesting story" is as multi-level in meaning as "entertainment". It raises the question, as Clifton did, of whom you are trying to interest, and brings up another point: can science fiction appeal only to an audience with specialized interests, or can it be as universal as mainstream literature?

Well, we have to remember that even with a 100% guaranteed, money back, "interesting story", everyone who reads it—even every "intelligent" and "mature" person—is not going to find it equally interesting; and some certified intelligent and mature persons are not going to be interested at all. (Such persons may appreciate

that it is a good story, but it'll be "not for them".) Dickens' "Christmas Carol" and James Joyce's "Ulysses" are both interesting stories, but the latter makes far more demands upon the reader than the former. Both are, in one sense, written for everybody and not written for anyone in particular—although the "everybody" group for "Ulysses" is necessarily smaller than that for Dickens.

A great deal of science fiction is written for everybody in the more restricted sense—though not to the degree in demands upon the reader—of "Ulysses"; a great deal is also written on the more universal level of "Christmas Carol". Both types can say a great deal; both types can be successful; both can stimulate thought. To some persons who enjoy "Ulysses", Dickens may be "just entertainment"; to some who love the "Christmas Carol", Joyce is dull, obscure, incomprehensible; but on an absolute level, both offer intelligent entertainment.

IT WOULD be nice, of course, if everyone could enjoy "Ulysses", "Christmas Carol", "Wizard of Oz" and science fiction, etc., as I do; but I have to assume that not everyone does. (It's a safe assumption!)

What about my assumptions in regard to *Science Fiction Quarterly*, *Science Fiction Stories*, and *Future*? I assume that my readers—and by them, I mean people who read science fiction steadily, or occasionally, or can be interested in becoming such readers—are capable of reading complex sentences without pain. I assume that they have some interest in science, and a little knowledge of it, but are not necessarily trained scientists or technicians. Thus I want science handled in such a manner that will neither be over my head or presented on the imbecile level. (There is nothing wrong in refreshing the reader on simple basic details so long as the author doesn't give the impression that he considers the reader stupid or almost hopelessly ignorant.) I assume that my reader-group is not afraid of ideas or of thinking. And I assume that they are not interested in comic-book plots, situations, and characters—not, at least when they are reading science fiction. (After all, it's no disgrace to enjoy Archie, Scrooge McDuck, Pogo, etc.)

In short, "entertainment" covers a wide range of possibilities, and fiction at any level from Peter Rabbit to "Finnegans Wake" can be entertaining; it can also be intelligent entertainment at any level.

Science fiction need not be limited to a specialized audience; if it has anything like the universal potentialities, as literature, that its most ardent enthusiasts claim and hope for it, then it should be available at all levels. To select any particular one and say that this and this alone is science fiction, and what science fiction should and must be, is as dangerous as giving total political power to any one party or group.

When they recreated that ancient time in Crete
they found more than scholars had ever dreamed —
or feared!

THE REGENERATORS

Novel

by CHARLES A. STEARNS

illustrated by ORBAN

THE VOGELSTADT RING came into Pete Harper's life and mine in '71. Most of the first models were innocent-appearing, laminated copper circlelets about the size of a dinner plate. When activated, they obtained an intensely powerful electromagnetic field of curious properties, and their enormous capacitance made them unique among converters. In those days every young electronics technician had built a Ring to play with in his spare time, for the experimental possibilities were exciting and varied.

Pete and I had invented a compound oscillator to go with our Ring, and we had been attempting to produce new wave modulations by lowering a free, tympanic vibrator on a wire into the strange, shifting field this afternoon that we discovered the eddy of regensis.

The Weird Sisters touch, by sheerest whim or fancy, the shoulder of this mortal or that, and he must always turn to meet them. For there had been over ten billions of possible permutative combinations of settings built into that oscillator, and the random modulus which I selected might not have been discovered in a thousand years.

The symptoms of the eddy were prompt and violent. The Vogelstadt

Ring, upon experimentation under heavy charge the week before, had burned the lab table, and therefore we had brought in an old windowbox full of dry sand and loam, and bedded the Ring upon this, since the material was dimagnetic, and a good insulator.

The vibrator did not vibrate this time when Pete threw the switch. With a crackling sound it was ejected from the field and swung madly about the periphery of the Ring for several seconds, before coming to rest at an impossible angle from the vertical, as though thrust aside by some invisible hand.

Meanwhile a milky haze had formed within the Ring. Part of it was wafted away through the open windows of the laboratory, while the rest suddenly took on brilliant color and form as Pete, startled, destroyed the circuit.

Within the Ring, before our astonished eyes, a circular clump of white violets had appeared, sprung from that long-dead soil in one split second, dewy and nodding slightly in the breeze!

"Wow!" Pete said. "Am I nuts, or do you see what I see?"

"I see it. But there haven't been any flowers planted in that old box since my grandfather's time," I said. Besides, the violets hadn't grown out of the soil; they had formed right in the air as we

watched. I knew that we must have stumbled onto some radically different kind of flux that nobody had ever dreamed existed.

"Are they real?"

I lifted up the Ring and carefully set it aside. I touched the flowers and sniffed them. They were real.

"It's time to do a little paper work," I said. "I'm going to take down all the values and combinations that the oscillator is set to produce right now. It'll take five or six hours at the least. Then we'll try to work out something. We've got something big here, and I've a feeling we'd better approach it with caution."

Pete glanced at his watch. He shrugged. "It's your lab, Barney, and anyway, I'm no good at theory. You work it out, and I'll see you in the morning. I'm going home to get cleaned up. Got a date to take Katie out to dinner tonight." He winked at me.

IT WAS A kind of un-funny rib. Katie had been my girl in the old days, when the three of us were in school together. In a way, the dream of this independent lab had belonged to all of us. Pete and I had always planned upon being partners when we grew up; and now we called ourselves "consulting engineers", and kept up this old building which had belonged to my family for generations. With spec developments and the like, we were able to scrape by, but Katie Waverly, who was our secretary, had to work for half what she could have made with one of the big firms.

We had planned to get married some day when we could afford it. It had been all set until a couple of months ago, when I'd found out that Katie had been taking our relationship more casually than I had. While I'd been up-state, working on plans for a new catalytic cracker for a petroleum outfit, Katie had gone out a couple of nights with Pete.



A great nimbus of mist was forming in the valley...enclosing it in a white, armorphous thing that writhed...

There'd been nothing wrong or clandestine about it. Pete had told me himself; he thought it was a good joke on me. Men liked Pete because he was good-natured, unassuming and easy-going. But he had some special attraction for women that I could never fathom. He was not especially good looking, but the conquest of females had always come easily to him, and he made a kind of game of it.

But Katie and I had argued; and it had seemed to me that she must be old enough to know her own mind. If her plans didn't include Barney Clay exclusively, we might as well forget the whole thing. Which, by mutual consent, we had.

Pete was eyeing me. "Anything wrong?" he said.

"Not a thing."

"Well, don't work too hard, and call me just as soon as you find out anything. Won't Katie be surprised when she learns that her boys have stumbled onto the secret of the ages!" He chuckled.

"You may not be far wrong at that," I said, "but let's not say anything until we've worked it out." As Pete had said, he was no theorist, and in an age of modern miracles, he was taking this more calmly than I.

He went forward to the office, and a moment later Katie appeared in the doorway. She was a tiny, Irish-flavored blonde, cuddly of shape, sweet of mouth. Standing in the doorway she could make your pulse race in spite of your resolutions.

"Is it okay with you if I leave now with Pete?" she said.

It was still ten minutes to five. "Sure," I said, turning my back on her and sitting down with my notebook before the oscillator. "Go ahead; I'm working late, but I won't need any help."

But she came forward. "What pretty violets!" she said. "Where did they come from?"

"Out of the air," I said. "We'll explain it to you in the morning. Don't bother me now; I'm busy." I thought I could feel her eyes upon me for several minutes before she left.

MY HEAD hurt. Something was pressing hard against my temple; it turned out to be my knuckles. My head lay in a nest of papers. I opened my eyes and sat up to find the sun shining brightly in my face. For a moment I couldn't remember what I was doing here in the lab; then it came to me that I'd been working at this desk until four o'clock this morning. I'd fallen asleep.

I went into the lavatory, splashed water on my face and combed my hair. I heard a car stop out front, and presently Katie and Pete came in, laughing and talking.

When they saw me slumped over the window sill, rubbing my eyes and gulping in fresh air, they stared. "It's all right," I said; "I just woke up."

"Say, I can't wait to hear what you've learned about the violets," Pete said. "What made them grow, anyway?"

"I'm not sure I've got the whole answer," I said, "but the trouble is that what I have got is so incredible you may not believe me."

"Shoot," Pete said. "Katie and I always believe everything you say, Professor—don't we, Katie?"

Katie nodded. Her eyes were smiling a little, I thought; I liked them that way.

"Well, I'm afraid it involves pure regeneration of matter," I said. "Something which the big boys have always said is impossible. This field, or eddy, that we've discovered is apparently able to invert the evolutionary process of all matter within its radius of influence."

"I don't get it," Katie said.

"It's a matter of molecular restoration. For instance, if I break this lead

pencil in two—thus—that is an evolution of matter. But if I were able to fit the broken ends together again, in this manner, but so perfectly that every molecule matched with the original force of cohesion renewed, that would invert the evolution of matter—and also of time itself, with respect to the pencil.

"You mean we've got a time machine?" Pete said.

"In a sense, we have the nearest thing that man can ever achieve to that paradoxical concept."

"Not so fast," Pete said. "Time travel always seemed like a good idea to me; I don't admit that there's anything paradoxical about it."

"Nevertheless, logic proves that it's not merely impossible; it's an irrational conception of the true nature of time—which, like space, is nothing more than our impression of remoteness of separation.

"According to Eberhardt and the rest, mass has recently been found to be similar to the force for fusion, and the space-time continuum the opposing element. The cosmos consists only of these patterns of relative separation of non-dimensional units of mass, and it is manifestly ridiculous to speak of 'traveling in time', when our own bodies are a part of the very cosmic pattern of which time is a mode."

"Can you reduce that to kindergarten terms?" Pete said.

"It merely means that the only way to reach the past is to *recreate* it, either in part, or *in toto*. Suppose that, having made this pencil whole again, I am now able to refit it into the original block of cedar, to restore the cedar to its log, the logs to its tree, the tree to the forest, and the forest to the earth, the air and the sun from which it sprang—then we should have gone back a century or so in time, *with respect to this pencil*.

"Obviously it is not possible to reverse the evolutionary patterns of the

entire universe, but we seem to have found a method of introducing a *temporary* stasis and reversal of the pattern of matter within a small area."

"Why temporary?" Pete said.

"Take a look at our violets.

"Why—they're gone! What happened?"

"IT HAPPENED about two o'clock this morning," I said. "I heard a crackling sound and when I looked up they disappeared. I suspect that it has something to do with the effects of *incomplete* regeneration. Many of the original molecules and sub-molecular particles, remember, which first made up these violets many years ago, are missing now—only the desiccated solids remained in the soil, and when the eddy occurred they must have formed, imperfectly, with the available moisture and gas molecules of the air to recreate the violets. They were not stable. Stable matter can be obtained, I'm sure, only when all of the original molecules are present within the field, and that would be a rare thing indeed. So you can see that the Ring has pretty severe limitations."

"But there are places where all of the original elements have been preserved," Pete said; "there must be."

"You've touched upon the real significance of our discovery, I said, "and it's not very pleasant to think about."

"Why? What's the matter?"

"If the obvious potentialities of the Field haven't occurred to you, they will. Far be it from me to stimulate your imagination—or the public's. The best thing that we can do is to destroy the formula and the lists of combinations and settings. Then we can forget the Ring. I'm afraid we've blundered onto something that man, in our time, is not emotionally equipped to handle."

"You must be kidding, Barney," Pete said, "if you think I'm going to give this up. We're on to a kind of

miracle. We can be rich and famous; and maybe that doesn't mean anything to you, but it does to me."

"There are much more important things," I said. "Believe me, the knowledge of what we've found must never reach beyond the walls of this lab, and I know what I'm talking about. I'll explain if you'll give me a chance."

He grinned a crooked grin. "You wouldn't be trying to hold out on me, Barney, just because *you've* got the formulae in your pocket?"

"Of course not," I said, feeling a surge of temper. "We're partners, but you're damned right about my holding onto these papers. They're too involved to memorize, and I'm going to burn them so that no one will ever be able to use them again. Now if you'll listen—"

An incredulous expression had come over Pete's face. "So you *do* want it for yourself," he said. "This finishes us, Barney, but don't think you've heard the last of this. I know my rights, and I'll take the thing to court if I have to. I'm going to tell the world what we've got, whether you like it or not. Goodbye!" He grabbed his hat.

"I've been trying to explain," I said, "but don't get the idea that I can't get along without you!"

He turned on his heel and stamped out. There was a pained expression on Katie's face as she and I stood there, eyeing each other.

"Are you leaving too?" I said.

"Barney, how *could* you!"

"It's not always easy to do what you have to do," I said, "but I spent all night working on this thing, and I don't mind telling you that it scares me. If you want me to explain, I will. If you want to walk out too, you can do that. I don't give a damn either way."

I was wrong about that, along with a lot of other things...

2



HE NEXT time I saw either of them was two weeks later, when Pete came into the lab one morning just before noon, without knocking. I was alone, designing a refrigeration coil for an appliance company—a farmed-

out job—when I heard his step.

Turning around, I saw him leaning against the doorway with his hands in his pockets. He grinned sheepishly at me. "Hi, Barney," he said.

I nodded. "What do you want?" I said.

"I suppose I want to apologize for running out," he said. "At least that's what I came for, if you don't make it too hard for me."

"You don't have to," I said; "it's forgotten. But I haven't changed my mind."

He actually brightened. "Then you haven't destroyed the formulae either? I can tell by the way you said it. Anyway, I didn't come here to argue." He extended his hand. "How about it?"

I accepted the hand. It was good to have him back. I wished that Katie had come with him, but I couldn't say so, not to Pete. "I was pretty arbitrary the other day," I said, "but if you'll bear with me now, I'll tell you what I meant. Remember what you said then about there being places where all of the original elements of the past might be preserved?"

He nodded.

"It had already occurred to me that the single, outstanding example of that would be the modern, air-tight tomb."

He sucked in his breath. "But that means that we'd have the power to bring back— My God, Barney!"

"Yes. The dead. But remember that this is no visionary time-machine lark; it's the real thing. Graves would yawn. Our ancestors could be returned to us in the bloom of their youth. Loved ones, wives, husbands, children and parents reunited. At first glance this might appear to be a wonderful thing, but actually it would be horrible. The entire social order might well collapse; the meaning of life itself be destroyed."

"It makes you shiver to think of it." Pete said. "I never thought of it that way. But I'm afraid I've already told one person about our discovery. She isn't interested in bringing back her ancestors; doesn't want them back. She's got much bigger things in mind for our budget. In fact, I think you might be interested, since she happens to be Berenice La Planche, the heiress."

"The nutty cultist who is always getting her name in the paper? Are you kidding?"

Pete grinned. "I wouldn't say that anybody with a hundred and eighty million bucks was crazy. As a matter of fact, Berenice is a very nice girl, once you get used to her."

"According to what I hear, she worships the old Greek gods, and goes around all of the time in a nightgown. Say, are you trying to tell me that you *know* her?"

"Do I know her! I've been her disciple for a week. That's how I sold her on this idea. For years she's been advertising for a scientist or medium who can make contact with the past, and—now don't get mad, Barney—I thought that we might do it just once. Anyway, it would be a nice gesture to science before we bury this thing forever, wouldn't it?"

He looked so deadly serious that I had to laugh. "You amaze me," I said.

"But listen, Barney, she knows the score, and she is willing to take her chances. She's willing to give us *carte blanche*. It's only this once, and it's im-

portant to me, Barney—very important."

"Why so important?"

He couldn't look me in the eye. His face was flushed. "Because this dame likes me," he said. "A hundred and eighty million dollars is a lot of money, and I'm a practical man. It's not that I'm trying to duck out on our partnership, but think what a lab we could build!"

"Do you mean it?"

"I intend to marry her."

You grow up with someone, and after thirty years you think you know him, and then you suddenly find you don't know him at all. "I don't admire your motive," I said.

"You don't have to; just help me."

"I want no part of any such deal. However, for old time's sake, I'm willing to talk to her."

"You will?" Pete said. "Thanks, old man! Wait until I get her. She's out in the car right now."

BERENICE LA PLANCHE was a tall, thirtyish woman. Her hair, at the time, was dull brown, straight and plain, pulled back severely and clasped with a single comb upon her neck. I'll never forget that particular fact if I live to be a hundred. Her complexion was not good, and she had the expression known among her kind as "spiritual". Nevertheless, her eyes were cold, blue and intelligent.

She offered me a firm hand. "I trust that my partner has explained to you, Miss La Planche," I said, "that what we have discovered is an electromagnetic phenomenon, and that the possibility that we can achieve whatever it is that you want is very remote."

"Peter has made all that quite clear," she said, smiling and taking his arm. "I am well versed in the physical sciences, Mr. Clay, and as a confirmed materialist, I quite understand the possibilities which are inherent in your discovery, even if you do not."

"A materialist, Miss La Planche?"

"I see that you have heard of me. But one must not believe everything that he reads in the papers. Yes, I am a materialist. But one who happens to believe that the ancient deities existed—in the flesh—at one period in the history of our earth, vibrant, beautiful, and supernally powerful, perhaps."

"And upon what material facts do you base your theory?" I said. Pete was giving me the frown and headshake.

"Upon many things. In the first place I never could credit the ancient Greeks with the powerful imaginative abilities that skeptics must allege them to have had. Moreover, Mr. Clay, I have amassed considerable evidence, by means of an ethnograph—which you will agree, at least, is an instrument of material science—that proves all of these so-called mythological super-beings, including the gods, giants and monsters of the fifth and sixth millennia B. C. to have emanated from a relatively exact locus, somewhere in the region of the Sea of Candia."

"And you seriously expect us to recreate them for you?"

"Of course not. Peter has explained to me that most mobile objects of the past are necessarily eliminated, as it is necessary to find a continuity of matter which has endured within the limitations of a small, given area since the time of its degeneration, and that even the land itself may erode, rise, or fall, and upset this continuity. I have taken all this into consideration, and I understand that it must be a purely physical regeneration, if you will. Also that the farther back we go in time, the less likely we are to be able to trace any important remnants of the past to their original intact state."

"And yet you wish to try it?"

"I do. I wish to try to recreate the ancient grove of Circe, which is believed to have been located near Mt.

Psilorin, on Crete, in the year six thousand B. C."

"But if this grove is of any size—and if such a thing were possible—it would cost literally millions of dollars for such an engineering project. Why this grove, anyway?"

"Let me make it clear," Berenice La Planche said, "that I am in full custody of my estate, and I can spend as much as I like. Secondly, the Grove of Circe consists of a half-acre of old oak trees, growing upon a basalt promontory in the center of a small, natural sink, or swamp, which has not drained or eroded outwardly in a hundred thousand years. Therefore it is a perfect physical location for our experiment. In the third place, there are obscure legends which indicate that the place was sacred not merely to Circe, who lived on Crete, but to all of the other gods as well. In short, Mr. Clay, it appears to have been a kind of *godhead*, or mother-organ of paranormal origin or nature."

"Paranormal?" I asked skeptically.

Berenice met my gaze with a chilling glance. "The word may be ill-chosen," she said. "The fact remains that I intend to reveal secrets of the ancients which will set your world of science on its ear. Remember that it is my money, and a chance for you and Peter to become famous."

"Come on, Barney," Pete said, linking his arm in Berenice's. He was a fast worker. "Don't be a wet blanket."

"Okay," I said at last. "It's your funeral. But there must be no publicity."

"Fine," said Berenice. "I feel the same way. Be ready to leave for Kanea in my private plane at eight o'clock on Thursday morning, if you can. We shall rent a 'copter from there to take us to Mt. Psilorin. I've been there several times before, and it will be a simple matter to begin the preliminary surveys. I need not tell you, Mr. Clay,

that I am thrilled beyond measure. I pray that we'll succeed."

I couldn't make any such prayer.

I can still remember Pete saying, "*Come on, Barney. Don't be a wet blanket.*"

3



HE SINK was as Berenice had said; deep, swampy and secluded. A few sheep grazed it, but we managed a three-year lease, which included authority to move out the two peasant huts and evacuate the livestock.

It measured, from the extremity of one hillside to the other, almost exactly a mile in diameter; and in order to attempt to recreate the central grove at a period of minus eight thousand years, it would be necessary to include the entire bowl of the valley.

This would mean a Vogelstadt Ring larger than any ever dreamed of, requiring thousands of tons of copper cable and plating—between fifteen and sixteen million pounds of copper, to be exact. I had no idea how long it would take to amass that much copper, or I would have given up at the outset. As it turned out, we had to leave a standing order with Anaconda for a little over thirteen months, and buy the rest from half a dozen smaller companies as we could get it. For months shiploads of cable arrived at Kanea, the capital of Crete, to be transported overland on special half-track trucks to our location.

This necessitated the building of a special road over the mountain; at the peak of construction, we employed over a thousand laborers, welders, electricians and civil engineers. Naturally

it was impossible to avoid publicity, but most of the natives held the opinion that it was some incomprehensible project of the U.S. Government; and since they were used to thinking of Uncle Sam in terms of superlatives, interest waned quickly.

Pete got a big kick out of giving misinformation to the news reporters. He was our contact man and buyer, and spent most of his time in transit across the Atlantic, or in conference with Berenice. We saw little of each other. I didn't know it then, but he was making progress. I needed Katie in the new office at Kanea, and she came.

After that, Katie and I saw each other every day, but we never revived the past, nor spoke of Pete. I couldn't help wondering how she felt about Pete and Berenice—or if she knew.

One of the biggest headaches with which I had to contend was one Colonel Kanelopolous, of the Greek army. He attended our project daily in his jeep as official observer of the government. He asked thousands of questions, and at each of my evasive answers he would nod his bald, leathery head as though it were perfectly clear.

But Kanelopolous was no fool, and a good many of his questions were shrewd and pertinent. He said, repeating an oft-uttered question, "What are you going to do with the big cable when you get it laid?"

"We are going to run electricity through it."

"But for that must it be three feet in diameter?"

"We are going to carry millions of amperes at a great voltage."

"But the only power station on Crete supplies only a hundred thousand kilowatts. Where will you buy so much current?"

IT WAS A good question, and one we'd been worrying about for a long time. I solved it, finally, by building a series of giant condensers, simplified

and rugged. They were constructed upon the same principle as the primitive Leyden Jar, and covered more than an acre of mountainside when finished, costing Berenice La Planche an additional half-million dollars. She got off easy, at that. Except for their simplified construction, they would have cost ten times that amount.

We didn't even try to compute their capacity accurately. We intended to let them build up the point of natural discharge, which would require several weeks of charging at the miniscule amount allowed us by the Cretan Utilities Department. The series had been designed to discharge a cell at a time, for I'd computed that approximately seven and one-half minutes would be necessary for the regenesiis desired.

It seemed a pity to waste so much time and money on an empty swale, but Berenice was still firm in her convictions that this had once been no ordinary place.

She was dreadfully right.

On the sixth of December, in 1972, the Vogelstadt Ring was finished, after eighteen months of grinding difficulty, and lay, like the Midgard Serpent, about the charmed valley that guarded the sacred grove of Circe.

It would require an additional month to set up fire stations around the periphery, clear away the new underbrush which had sprung up along the bed of the Ring, and charge the condensers.

Three weeks before the project was completed, Pete and Berenice were married in Rome, and spent a three day honeymoon at Capri.

IT WAS PLAIN from the very first that Berenice considered Pete another successful coup to add to her brilliant record. She'd been married a couple of times before, though I didn't learn that until later. Pete had known all along.

I'll never forget the way he looked

when we shook hands that morning after he and his wife had landed in an open meadow near our advance shack at the head of the valley. Cynical. A little haggard, but defiant. I could see that things were not going as well as he had thought they would, but when I said, "Congratulations, Pete," he raised one comical eyebrow, ever so slightly, and that was the nearest that he ever came to confiding in me.

"Are we ready for the big moment?" he said, with a glance at Berenice.

"We can't be sure," I said; "the condensers may discharge within an hour or two, or it may be more than a day. We're letting them build to the peak and hoping the thing doesn't blow its top. We've got to be ready to go in at any time."

The six technicians who had remained behind to check the condensers and watch the gauges, were already getting uneasy, as a matter of fact, and at noon they refused to stay any longer. They were afraid that when the Jars went, lightning might crackle in every direction.

Even old Kanellopolous was uneasy, but he wouldn't leave. All of the workmen had long since vanished, and there were only the five of us there—Katie had come up to watch the show—waiting out the endless minutes and hours from a cautious distance.

Berenice had gone into one of the tool shacks and changed her slacks for a thin, chiton-like robe, clasped at one shoulder, and leaving the other naked. It was open on one side, and not exactly of modest coverage. It should have upset a husband of three weeks, but Pete didn't seem to mind that old Kanellopolous was staring, pop-eyed—he, whose ancestors had originated the custom of exhibitionism.

"This is your project, Mrs. Carter," I said, "but that thing you're wearing is hardly durable enough for our little exploration, if things work out."

"It is highly suitable," she said cool-

ly. "It is what the vestal virgins wore, and I am told that they met with special favor in the eyes of the gods. And let me unburden you concerning one other thing. It is not *we*, but *I* who will venture into the Ring. Alone. It is my project and my money."

"You can't do that," I said. "There may be danger. Besides, Pete and Katie and I have worked hard on this thing; we have a right to go and make a scientific record of this thing."

"In any case I forbid you to set foot upon the sacred ground."

Kanelopolous gave argument, and she quickly put him in his place.

"Are you going to let her get away with this?" I said to Pete.

He shrugged, and grinned mirthlessly. "Afraid I'm only the husband of Berenice La Planche."

"Peter!" she snapped. "That's unkind. You *know* I'm very fond of you—haven't I willed half my estate to you? But I simply must remind you that this is my dream, my project, and my money, as Mr. Clay is always observing. It is also my *moment*, and I refuse to share it with anyone. You will remain outside until I return; then you may explore, if there is any time left. I—"

One of the portable sensitometers clicked loudly. "Get ready for the fireworks," I said. "Here she goes!"

THE WORDS were hardly out of my mouth before a thunderous crackle came from the condensers below us.

The giant Vogelstadt Ring began to smoke suddenly. It glowed faintly. Then brightly red, turning to a pale orange. The grass and weeds twenty feet away began to blaze. The very ground beneath it had begun to glow and crack. A great nimbus of mist was forming in the valley, gradually blotting it from sight, enclosing it in a white, amorphous thing that writhed, swirled and eddied from the constant

in-surge of the light wind from off Psi-lorin.

There was a sudden, high-pitched singing in the air; then ominous silence. The mist began to lift.

Minutes passed. The whining of the condensers had faded away too. They were dead. The Ring was now a great, black coil about the sink, with enormous heat cancers eaten in its skin here and there. I remember thinking that it could never be used again.

The valley was once more visible. For two hundred yards toward the center, the familiar, rocky, furze-covered slopes were visible, but beyond, a sudden, sharp drop in the surface had appeared, and beyond this edge the tops of bright, green trees were visible—*where no trees had been before.*

"Did—did we succeed?" whispered Berenice.

"We've got something," I said. "Note that the level of the swale is some thirty feet lower than before. That means that it must have filled in considerably in the last few thousand years. It's a good sign. Nevertheless, I doubt if it will maintain its stability for more than two or three hours; when it reverts to the present, we don't want to be inside, or we'll be buried under tons of earth in a split second. Clear?"

Pete and I threw a portable aluminum stile over the still-hot Ring and all of us crossed over to the rim of the hollow that we had scooped out of the ages. Kanelopolous was speechless, for once.

"Look over there!" Pete exclaimed, "there are some animals in the time trap at last. Looks like wild horses. Three of them. Down there, Barney."

I put my binoculars to my eyes. A chill clutched my spine. I rubbed my eyes and looked again; but it was real. "Horses," I lied. "You were right. Surely you don't intend to go into there alone now, Mrs. Carter?"

"Of course I'm going alone," Ber-

enice said excitedly. "It's only half a mile to grove. You can see the clump of tall oaks from here."

"They look the same as before," Katie observed.

"They're not; I feel sure that they're the original trees' great grandfathers, many times removed. See how much greener they are than the other trees in the valley?"

She began to scramble down the steep incline to the floor of the valley, heedless of the effect of sharp rocks upon her flimsy robe.

"We can't let her go," whispered Katie to me.

"We can't stop her," I said. I was sulking.

She was soon out of sight in the glade of hardwoods below us, but presently moved back into the range of our vision in the meadow beyond.

The beasts in the far corner of the meadow raised their heads and looked at her, then went on grazing. Two avians, dark, curious, long-tailed things, were circling over the mysterious clump of oaks in the distance.

Several minutes, that seemed like hours, went by. Pete said, "I'm going to follow her, Barney; the rest of you wait for me."

He left. Another half-hour passed. Kanelopolous was getting fidgety. So was I. "This is the craziest thing I ever heard of," I said. "The greatest chance for archaeological study in history, and here we sit, doing nothing."

"Will there ever be another Ring?" Katie asked.

"Never," I said; "I meant what I said that day in the office."

"I've been meaning to talk to you about that," Katie said.

For weeks I'd been wishing for the ice to be broken, just to give my pride a chance. But now I brushed it aside. There wasn't time. "I'm going down," I said. "You and the Colonel go back and wait for me; if I'm not back in

forty-five minutes, get clear of the ring, do you hear? Don't wait for us."

"Is there something wrong?"

"Wrong? Of course not."

"But you seem worried."

"It's only that I'm afraid Berenice has been on the right track after all, all these months. She's having the last laugh on us, and I only hope it isn't *her* last."

"Surely you can't mean that this really is the valley of the old gods?"

"I don't know about that, but do you see those animals over there beneath the opposite rim?"

"The wild horses?"

"Horses, nothing!" I said. "They're unicorns."

4



T WAS MAD, of course, impossible, but the glasses couldn't lie. I had seen a long, straight horn protruding from the center of each of those silken-maned heads, just as I had seen in a thousand paintings of

of these supposedly mythical creatures. I didn't quite get it, but it appeared that Berenice La Planche—rather, Carter—had been completely right in at least one respect. There must be something in or near this valley which caused, or had once caused mutations of normal fauna—or at least trans-morphic variations.

Had she been right about the rest? Had this mysterious substance worked on humans at one time as well, giving them seemingly supernatural powers, or causing gigantism? One thing was certain. What ever forms had evolved had been unable to perpetuate themselves—meaning, at least, that they were not immortal, as the myths would have us believe.



There wasn't much time left. I set out for the oak grove on the promontory. I had to locate them soon.

Around me, the woods, the treeless little bogs, the flowers and plants all seemed normal and twentieth century.

But presently I noted that the ground was rising, and that the trees had taken on a strange appearance. I reached up and pulled off a leaf. It was not like any leaf I'd ever seen before. Something fluttered across the clearing ahead of me. It was one of the long-tailed avians we'd seen from a distance. But I had a better look at it now, and it was no bird. I remembered the stories of the basilisks of old.

Then I saw Pete. He appeared to be stalking something. There was an automatic in his hand, and he was creeping forward, toward some point beyond my scope of vision, with utmost stealth.

I followed, careful not to break any twigs under my feet.

At last he stopped and parted thick reeds of a curious blue-green quality, and stopped as though hypnotized. I couldn't see his face, but I got the impression that something had profound-

ly shocked him. The gun shook in his hand.

I came up beside him and quietly laid my hand on his shoulder. He jumped guiltily, started to slip the weapon under his jacket, then shrugged and put it in his pocket.

Beyond him, in the grove of giant oaks, beneath a small, brilliantly scarlet-leaved tree, was Berenice.

The curious sensation of being an interloper in a fairy world was upon us both. It was unreal. That blood-colored tree, and *she*, subtly changed. She was Berenice, and yet something more; she had gained an aura since we had last glimpsed her. Sitting there beneath that strange little tree, with the sun filtering through upon her golden skin, it came as a profound shock to me that she seemed, suddenly, desirable. The most desirable woman I had ever seen. I caught myself breathing hard. Pete was feeling it, too.

And as we watched in silence, she picked up one of the red plums that had fallen from the tree and put it in her mouth. Her lips were stained red.

I could hear Pete's labored breathing beside me. "Wow!" he said softly. "Is that my wife?"

"Come on," I said, shaking him. "We've got to get her and get out of here; we can't take the chance of waiting any longer."

Pete laughed. It was an almost hysterical sound. "What's happened to her, Barney?" he said. "What's the matter with her? What's the matter with *me*?"

"I don't know," I said, "but let's go. It's over an hour and a half since the regeneration already; there's not much time left."

"Wait," Pete said thickly. "I-I'll get her. Berenice, honey!"

SHE DIDN'T get up as he came forward, but looked up at him with an incomparable slyness. There was not the slightest sign of recognition in the eyes, which, like her skin, seemed to

have a preternatural glow. When Pete was over her, she held out her hand and he knelt down beside her.

It may sound like a fairy story. I'm going to remember it that way, because it's better so for my peace of mind. But then I could feel the same, eerie pull of her—call it libido, but it was more than that—that Pete was experiencing. Luckily a part of my logical mind was still working.

I could wonder if it was the tree itself which contained the elixir of the gods that we had sought. None of us would ever know for certain, for there'd be no time to examine it at length. But for a moment I had time to wonder about the tree. How had it gotten there? A seed dropped by some star race to stimulate lagging evolution on primitive Earth, which had failed of its mission?

Or *had* the tree failed? I remembered another myth of a famous tree in another enchanted grove with the ability to change all who tasted its fruit. Eden. Could this tree, itself mutated by the centuries, have come down alive from that dawn age to beget the gods and monsters of antiquity? If so, what was happening—what would happen—to Berenice?

But one thing about which we could have no illusions was the impermanence of this valley.

I went forward and seized Berenice by the hand, pulling her to her feet. She fell against me, with a limpness that had a sensual impact that made it hard indeed to be objective. Her hair had gained a perfume, and a stimulating sheen like no hair that I had ever seen before.

"Come on, damn it," I said to Pete. "Help me; take her other arm and let's get moving."

Berenice didn't want to leave. She kept pulling back until we were well away from the grove, but we kept moving steadily for fifteen minutes, and all

of us were breathing hard by the time we reached the rim.

Once I saw a nameless thing I'd rather forget. Just a glimpse of a bestial face. But we reached the stile without incident, and the Ring had almost cooled off now.

Colonel Kanelopolous was waiting for us on the other side, and helped us over. Exhausted, still holding onto Berenice's hands to keep her from going back, we flung ourselves down upon the grass.

Pete grinned a sickly grin at me. I decided that I must have been wrong about him. He couldn't really have been pointing the gun at Berenice. Not Pete. But for a moment back there I'd got the impression of impending evil. Now the evil was gone.

But just at that moment there was a sudden, sharp tremor and grinding, thunderous sound—and before our gaze the little valley seemed to reel, and was suddenly gone. The plowed fields, the grazing meadows with their picket fences were there intact. The past had returned to the past.

"Well," said Pete softly, "that's that."

Berenice was crying, and he put his arm around her, and touched her hair with his hand. The hair had little silver-green threads running through it.

And all at once, like the knell of doom, my senses returned to me in a flash. I sprang to my feet and seized Kanelopolous by the lapels of his uniform. "*Where is Katie?*" I screamed.

The Colonel looked as though he were about to cry. "I keep telling her not to go. Americans are crazy."

"Not—down there!"

He nodded.

I did a reasonless, idiotic thing. I hit him on the mouth with the back of my hand and he reeled backwards. I kept on striking at him, and screaming until Pete pinned my arms behind my back and they got me to quiet down.

LATER, THEY said that I roamed the swale and the grove for three days. It seemed a lifetime. I examined each blade of grass, every tree, and rock, and shrub. I remember that much. There was nothing to be found, of course. She was gone forever; buried thirty feet deep somewhere beneath a hundred centuries of alluvial swamp.

Pete only remained with me one day, and then took Berenice home to the States. I didn't even know when they left.

I remained in Kanea another week before taking a plane back to the States. By the time I got there, Berenice had completed what might be termed her ecdysis; she had exchanged the middle-aged spinster cultist for something quite different.



I went to see them at her estate. It was one of the feudal palaces that had been popular with the Hundred in the last century.

At first I didn't know either of them. Pete had adopted a white robe, like hers. When he tried to explain the thing to me, it didn't make much sense—or else I wasn't very receptive. He said that he was Circe's proselyte. I didn't get the idea until later, when I met Berenice. Her hair had grown out long—shoulder length—and it was of a pure, lustrous white with a greenish undercast and burnished red tips. The most wonderful and startling color that I had ever seen.

She was very proud of it.

Her facial planes had changed too, or at least it seemed so. The mouth and lips had become full and sensual; the lashes long; the face more

oval and glowing with unnatural life.

I had talked with her for a little while in the garden. She had a sinuous, lordly grace, and it didn't take long to learn that, despite the fact that she was otherwise quite rational, there was a fixation.

Berenice believed that she was the reincarnation of Circe.

This was the twentieth century, a scientific, unsuperstitious age. And yet there were still many things that we didn't know. I'd found myself thinking "Poor Pete" as I left, but underneath, the subconscious was really whispering "Poor Barney Clay", for the hollow burden of Katie's loss was like a constant incubus riding my shoulders, and I was feeling pretty sorry for myself.

It was an excuse to let myself go, as it turned out.

IT WAS SIX months later that I next saw Pete Carter. I'd been sitting in a bar not far off skid row. Not a very good bar. I ducked behind a newspaper when I saw him come in, for I looked pretty seedy those days, usually needed a shave, and had been avoiding everyone that I knew. I was being pretty childish; I can see that now.

But he spotted me just the same, and came over to clasp my hand with a fervent gladness at finding me. He clung to my hand as though afraid I'd get away. He was dressed in street clothes.

"How is Berenice?" I said. "Still the delusion?"

For a second there was a glint of fear in his eyes. He said in a hurt voice, "It's not a delusion, Barney." He was in dead earnest.

"Okay," I said. "Sorry I brought it up."

He sat down and clasped his head in his hands. "Maybe I'm losing my mind, though," he said; "maybe you're right, Barney."

"Trouble?" I said.

"No special thing." He shook his head. "But it's a lot of little things. Sometimes she frightens me, Barney. Go ahead and laugh, but she does. Did you ever look deep into her eyes? And when we go to bed at night, lots of times I fall asleep and spring up in bed wide awake ten minutes later, with my face burning all over, and shivering from the dream I just had."

"What kind of dream?"

"I am never able to remember, but it must be pretty unpleasant. Anyway, when I wake up, Berenice will be lying with her head close to mine, and her eyes are always wide open. She's awake, and the breeze, blowing through the terrace, is rippling her hair into my face. I suppose that's what wakes me up." He shook his head as though to clear it of these cobwebs of tangled thought, and tried to manage the old grin, with little success. "What have you been doing these days, Barney?"

"Working hard," I lied.

"I suppose you think about Katie a lot," he said. "So do I, but the past is past."

I didn't want that subject brought up. The months had dragged by since the long, painful and fruitless investigation over Katie's death. It had almost been an international incident. I was now *persona non grata* in Greece. Nevertheless there had been something in what he said that had stirred a nameless little excitement deep in my subconscious. What had it been? Nothing so grand as a surge of hope. *The past is past*. But was it?

It was a wild, fantastic idea. "Pete," I said, grabbing his arm, "Let's rebuild the Vogelstadt Ring around the valley."

He just looked at me for a moment and shook his head sadly. "You know they'd never let us try it again. Besides, I haven't got the money. Only Berenice could afford it, and I don't think she remembers that Katie existed. Do you remember what you once

told me over in the old lab about yawning graves, Barney? You were right. It's best to let the dead lie in peace and forget the regenerative eddy and the Ring forever. You'd never find her, Barney. Remember that she's lost somewhere between the ages, and we don't know exactly where. You'd just be giving yourself more grief."

His logic didn't reach me. There'd been a day when he would have tried to help me. "Do you mind if I talk to Berenice this afternoon?" I said.

"I'd rather you didn't."

"But I've got to, anyway," I said, "Coming with me?"

He laughed shortly. "No, I sneaked out, you know. And anyway, she'll be happier to see you alone. She likes males you know. I'm not enough for her; Circe needed an entire court, you'll remember."

I stared at him. It was Pete Carter speaking to me, and he was completely serious. I could only surmise then what had happened to him...

5



FOUND her in the shadows of the vine-covered porte cochere behind the house. The servants here were like shadows themselves; seldom seen, never heard. The place seemed almost deserted.

She was not surprised to see me. She'd been resting in a lawn chair, and all I could see at first was the shimmering light from her hair, like changeable taffeta. I was reminded of unripe, red-seeded strawberries early in the spring.

When she saw me, she got up and came toward me, with arms outstretched. It was a little disconcerting. "You came at last," she said.

"What made you think I'd come, Mrs. Carter?"

"Oh, I knew that there was rapport between us. I commanded you to come."

Her eyes were bottomless, and if you looked into them long enough you could see—I shook my head to free myself of her spell.

"I'm here on business," I said, "and if it's a command performance, it's news to me." She was almost touching me. Too near.

She said, matter-of-factly, "The business of Circe is love."

The eyes had the potential of draining away all forbearance, all inhibitions, leaving only the raw, amoral passions. "I can not doubt that you are at least her high priestess, then, Mrs. Carter," I said; "but what if the spell that is upon you fades and you become plain Berenice La Planche again?" I didn't really believe that. She was a pure transmutation, perhaps. It had only been a momentary flash of inspiration.

Her eyes widened. "That *drab!*" she said, wrinkling her nose. "Do you think it is possible?"

She was not so mad after all.

"It might happen. But if you could return to the sacred grove of Circe and renew or augment the spell who knows but that you might even become immortal."

"You mean, rebuild the Ring?"

"Why not. You could afford such a project many times."

She nodded. "Nevertheless, what you suggest is impossible. We might not succeed again in a hundred years. Besides, I am Circe; I have my own grove out there." She waved a hand. "Stay here with me and forget it."

"I must go to Rome," I said. "I hope you'll join me there. We can be together then."

"Why should I join you? I am a goddess, with the power to make men come to me."

"I was only expressing a hope," I said.

THE CHANCE that I was taking was a million to one shot, based on an idea I had that one important facet of the character of the old Berenice La Planche, the pampered heiress, remained. All of her life she had gotten everything she wanted. Now I was trying to present, in my own small way, a challenge to her.

I'd flown to Kanea on my third day in Rome and estimated the cost of rebuilding the Ring. It would take, I discovered, over half a million dollars. I had had, after buying my ticket to Rome, almost exactly six hundred dollars left.

In many places every strand of cable in the immense coil was burned in two. However, the condensers were still intact, and by splicing and rebuilding the entire plant could be renewed for a third of its original cost. Despite the fact that I didn't have a fiftieth of that amount I knew that someday, in some manner, I was going to go back and look for Katie.

The Greek government had posted a permanent guard around the project, and it was hard for me to get in. Therefore it would be almost impossible to successfully broach the subject of renewing and reactivating the Vogelstadt Ring. They were still not sure what had happened in the remote swale of Heracion, on Central Crete, but they were suspicious.

Nevertheless, I went to see Colonel Kanellopolous, who had apparently forgiven me that outburst of seven months ago, and he promised to do what he could. I didn't tell him that I still had no backing.

In July I ran out of money and went to work for a construction outfit in North Africa for six months. During that time Berenice wrote often, and I had one letter from Pete, a pitiful, rambling thing without any sense to

it. Instead of answering, I wrote to Berenice, making it plain that she would still be welcome.

In the spring she came to Rome, alone, and I met her there.

I didn't bring up the subject of the project at once. I was going to let her think it was her idea this time. She was more like a child than I'd remembered her, in her vagueness, and her peremptory demands on my time. I tried to be agreeable, but days crawled by.

The insidious transformation appeared to be still at work within her, and if I could not get action soon, it might be too late. For she might lose her mind, and then control of the estate would pass into Pete's hands. I could expect no help from him. I was sure that he had become a prematurely aged and frightened drudge by now. In a way, what had happened to him was more startling than the effect of the fruit had been upon her.

There were many signs of her impending breakdown. She cried often, for no apparent reason, and stopped as suddenly. She was superstitious about her hair, and always kept it covered on sunny days.

She was Pete's wife, but I didn't try to remember it. I had decided that the means were justified by the end. And I was aware, also, that whatever passions had driven her here could not be satisfied by anything of this earth. It was well for her to be restless, but difficult to deny her anything.

"What are you thinking about?" she asked one day. "Why do you always oppose me?"

"I was thinking of the tree that made you what you are."

"I think of it often. Do you think we really could locate it again in time?"

"We could try. And Colonel Kannelopolous has agreed to help me straighten out diplomatic problems with the government. Things have

cooled off a bit by now, you know."

We talked it over for a while. "Very well," she said at last. "I'll give you *carte blanche* once more. Here are some blank checks that I've signed. That proves I trust you. I suppose I really must go back to Peter for awhile. He depends upon me, you know. When you're ready, let me know." She put my arms around her, with her insistent hands. "This time we shall go together. Perhaps we shall become immortal and never have to return."

"You and Pete?"

"You and I," she said.



IT WAS NECESSARY, first, to buy over a million feet of copper cable to replace what had been burned up. Also we had to find thousands of square yards of inch-thick curved copper sheathing for the outside.

It was worse than the first time, when I'd had Pete to help me. Pete was beyond helping anybody now; he was paying for a momentary homicidal notion that he might have had once.

There were the usual labor troubles,

supply bottlenecks, and arguments with the provincial officials. Yet, thinking back, I can't remember a single day of that nightmarish eleven and a half months.

Except for the day that it was all finished, and I became afraid that I wouldn't have the nerve to try the experiment again.

The day before the last strand was welded I got a curious letter from Pete. It read:

Dear Barney,

I can't go on. You're the only one who will ever believe that I have to do what I'm about to do. It will be all over by the time you get this letter, so don't try to stop me.

Remember that day at the edge of the sacred grove in the prehistoric swale on Crete when you caught me with the gun? I knew what you were thinking. But I couldn't really have killed her; not then. It was just a crazy idea. You see, in the three weeks that we'd been married I'd already found what life with her was going to be like. I couldn't call my soul my own, and she was frigid and as anti-septic as a hospital. I was just something for her to wear in public, like a fur coat. And I'll admit that it seemed to me for a moment that I could do it, just to have her off my neck. There would have been over fifty million bucks in it for me, and no one would have ever guessed; the evidence would have been buried, like Katie, beyond the ages. But as I said, I couldn't do it. I wish I had.

For several weeks now I've been carrying around a secret that no man could bear alone, and no other man has ever had to bear. I've known for quite a while that my wife is something more—or less—than human. But not long ago I found out just what that something is.

As you know, it is her opinion that since being exposed to the fruit of that strange little tree she has become Circe, in the flesh. I believed her after a while; now I know that I was wrong.

She is not Circe. She is something a good deal more unpleasant than that sorceress. Yet I am still under her spell, and I can never leave her. She is the only woman that I could ever love. I can't expect you to understand, for it's not what you might have felt for Katie, for instance. It's not that clean.

And incidentally, Katie is gone forever, but I'm sure she'd want you to know that I never could get to first

base with her. She didn't have eyes for anyone except you.

In a few hours, Barney, the thing will be accomplished. This morning I went down to the lab to get the thing I need, and I'm there now, writing this at Katie's old desk.

But it's getting late, and I must go back to her. Circe, indeed! What irony!

Goodbye, Barney. You'll find the answer to all this mess in a sealed, aerated vial in the refrigerator of the lab here when you get home. Destroy the contents when you have examined them, for they may be still potentially dangerous. I don't know. You see, the vial contains a fragment of the distilled evil of the ages.

Your friend,
Pete Carter

I GOT ON the phone at once, but it took almost two hours to get through to New York, and then I couldn't get Pete and Berenice's estate. At last I gave the operator the number of Jonathan Wescott, who was Pete's lawyer and a good friend of the family. His voice, the first American one I'd heard in weeks, sounded good.

"Barney! I haven't heard from you in two years. Where have you been keeping yourself?"

"I'm calling from Kanés, the capital of Crete," I said. "Listen, Jon, have you talked to Pete or Berenice in the last few days?"

There was a prolonged silence on the other end of the line.

"Didn't you hear me?"

"You didn't know about the accident then, Barney?"

"What?"

"Pete dumped a beaker of acid on Berenice the other night, while she was asleep in bed; then he did for himself. She's in the hospital, taking transfusions, but the doctors don't give her much chance. No one knows exactly what happened—nor ever will know, I suppose."

"You mean—Pete's dead?"

"He did a thorough job of it, Barney. Used a forty-five automatic. Sorry no one let you know. We all feel pretty bad."

First Katie. Then Berenice and Pete.

I had to rally quickly, though. The first thing that Berenice Carter's lawyers would do, would be to freeze her bank account, in case of her death. That would mean that the checks in my pocket would become worthless; payments would stop, and the project must halt now, so near completion. All that remained was the charging of the condensers.

I called the utility company, which was government controlled, and talked the officials into cutting us in. Then I took the first plane home.

I arrived too late to talk to Berenice Carter.

It was a society funeral; no one even noticed me, and I got a look at her. I had to have that look. They'd put a wig on her, and her face had been fixed up. All of the wonderful hair had been destroyed. She looked very peaceful lying there, almost spiritual. In the old days she'd have considered that a compliment, and all of her weird friends from half a dozen cults and mystic organizations were there, many dressed in their sacerdotal and vestal robes.

I got back to Kanea just in time to get a call from Colonel Kanelopolous.

It seemed that the power company wanted its money, and if the check was not forthcoming for the last week's electric bill, power would be cut off from the condensers. That would be disastrous, for according to my calculations it would still be six hours until discharge.

I'd run out of signed checks, and I doubted that any more would be forthcoming, but if I could persuade them to wait a few more hours, it would be too late for them to do anything about it. They could take the outfit in forfeiture then, if they liked.

"I've got the money right here," I said casually; "you'll have to send a man after it."

I hung up before he could object; then I left word at the desk of my

hotel that I was going to the Mt. Psi-lorin camp, and to tell the power company's representative that he would have to come up there if he wanted to see me.

It was a long bluff, but it might stall them for a few hours, and I must take the chance. By the time they found me, it should be too late.



I HAD STOPPED at our old lab that morning. I'd had to go back there once more, despite the memories that lingered there. The secret to which Pete had alluded must still be there—if it had existed anywhere except in his tortured mind. The lights came on in the office when I flicked the switch. That meant that the refrigerator might still be working.

But as I stepped into the deserted lab, with its thick layer of dust all over everything, my mind fled back to that last day on Crete.

How we had made the valley of Circe again, and I had gone down into it with a sick numbness which was worse than no hope at all.

How I'd had four light magnesium bombs in my pack and a rifle under my arm. How I'd cupped my hands and called her name—over and over.

I must have called it a thousand times in that allotted hour and a half, but there was never any answer, and I'd known, presently, that I would have to get out or be caught just as Katie had been caught. I'd come a century too late—or too early. Or perhaps she was in limbo, where I could never reach with the tools of science.

I'd plunged deeper into the thickets, and once had heard a heavy animal crashing through the underbrush to my right, but paid it no attention. And presently the sacred grove had been before me, dark and still.

I'd climbed up to its flat, basalt floor and plunged into the gloom, and presently found the tree with its blood-red leaves, and its red fruit.

But still no sound or sight of Katie. Only the whisper of the wind in the tops of the oaks. I carried out the hollow remnants of the plan I'd conceived long ago.

I placed the magnesium bombs under the tree, to the north, the south, the east and the west of its gnarled trunk, and walked away fifty paces.

I detonated the caps of the bombs in rapid succession with the rifle and watched while that monstrous thing was consumed by the awful heat. Even the roots were baked, and the ground, where the deadly fruit had fallen, was charred and blackened when it was all over. There was not a vestige of it left.

No future time traveler could ever come back to this valley and this age and find the tree, for its component atoms were now in the form of hot gases, lifting up to the sky to be borne out across the Mediterranean Sea by the winds of the upper atmosphere.

I filled my nostrils with the grateful scent and then set out with a blistered face for the rim.

It had seemed to me, presently that someone was calling my name. But that, too, might have been the wind.

I TOOK THE vial out of the refrigerator and unsealed it. I removed its contents with a pair of forceps and laid them on a piece of filter paper. They consisted only of a lock of Berenice's hair. It was still glistening and vibrant, with its red tips. The last reminder of her on this earth.

Only hair. I was puzzled. Then I saw that Pete had set the low power magnifier scope out on the bench. I put the hair under the glass and bent over to peer into the eyepiece.

My heart stopped beating for an instant. I drew back from the glass, shaken. Then, with a steadier grip on myself, I looked again. It was real.

I lighted a bunsen burner, and there was a cold band about my middle.

Katie came in and put her arms around me. She, at least was real. For these glorious two weeks. I had found her at the very last minute before the dispersion of the field, and we had escaped barely in time.

"You're trembling," she said, looking into my eyes. "The—the bad dream is over, isn't it? This is really us, alive and back to normal."

"We're real, and the bad dream is over," I said. I picked up the lock of hair with the tweezers and held it over the burner. The hairs writhed and crackled as they burned to nothing.

I found myself thinking that the ancient Greeks must have had a rather grim sense of humor. They'd be laughing somewhere, now.

"Odysseus escaped from Circe once," whispered Katie.

I shook my head. "This was Perseus," I said. The hairs were still alive, you comprehend, though dying. Greenish-white. I'd remember them for the rest of my life, with their tiny, blind heads raised under the eyepiece, with their red, rosebud mouths gaping, opening and closing, in a weary ritual of the strange hunger of a hundred centuries.



INSIDE SCIENCE FICTION

A Department For The Science Fictionist

by Robert A. Madle

SCIENCE FICTION wins battle in Germany: In the short space of one month the entire future of science fiction in Germany was decided. And, thanks to the valiant efforts of s-f proponents in Germany, England, and the USA, the future of German s-f is now bright indeed.

There are two s-f magazines published in Germany: *Utopia-Kleinband* and *Utopia-Grossband*. The former is the single-character type of magazine (such as we used to have before s-f went modern: *Doc Savages* and *Captain Future*, for example) while the latter is a general publication containing varied material. "The Battle of the Bonn" began when the "Dirt and Trash Law of 1968" was passed. This was aimed primarily at protecting the youth of Germany, and the government felt that the mind of its youth might be injured by science fiction's "atmosphere of tension, glorification of atomic war, interplanetary destruction, etc."

Realizing that his magazines were facing almost certain abolition, Editor Walter Ernsting sent out an urgent appeal to Forrest J. Ackerman. Ernsting said, "I am alone in a difficult fight against these people who do not understand why some of these S-F Novels are so realistic and sometimes 'horrible.' They do not see that only the realistic description is able to prevent people to ever use such weapons in the future. The development of science fiction is in serious danger. Give me an article! ... With your words with me I am not alone and I will be able to stand against the whole bunch of bigotry."

Ackerman's response was instantaneous. He composed a 2,000 word defense of science fiction, slanted directly at the German mind. The names of Hugo Gernsback, Willy Ley, Fritz Lang, Curt Siodmak, and Otfried

von Hanstein were woven into this remarkable straight-from-the-heart narrative. Ackerman, in closing, stated, "Don't turn your back on science fiction; don't kill the opportunity for a literature, which has proven its value elsewhere in the world, to live and grow and demonstrate its worth to you. Germany has given much to science fiction—God grant you will now have the vision to get from science fiction the wisdom, strength, and courageous, constructive imagination which are the basic ingredients of this 'escape' literature. Yes, in dreams today that will be built into realities tomorrow, with Science Fiction lighting the pitfalls to be avoided and beckoning its readers on to glowing goals and greater glories: a beacon, ever burning brightly!"

In addition to Ackerman, others joined Editor Ernsting. James Taurasi and Ray Van Houten publicized the story in *Fantasy Times*; New York fandom sent a cablegram of protest to the investigating committee; letters of indignation and appeal to reason were sent by the Fantasy Foundation and the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, as well as by individuals in California, Colorado, and elsewhere in the nation. Julian Parr, an English fan, attended the proceedings and reported, "... a very fair trial, science fiction emerging with its position strengthened in the process." The final vote of the committee was 12-0 in favor of science fiction. Immediate results: plans for the founding of the first German science fiction club, a new s-f quarterly, and a "Bonn-Con" in '68.

Last Call for the Clevention: As this issue of *Science Fiction Quarterly* goes to press, only several weeks remain until the 1966 World Science Fiction Convention takes place. Cleveland, Ohio is the town,

Hotel Manger is the headquarters, and September 2, 3, 4 and 5 are the dates. Isaac Asimov, scientist, s-f writer, and humorist par excellence, will be the guest of honor. Toastmaster at the banquet will be the editor of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, Anthony Boucher. Others scheduled for the program are Wilson "Bob" Tucker, James E. Gunn, and Mark Clifton.

Among the other features of this once-a-year spectacle will be a collectors' panel composed of such people as Lloyd A. Eshbach, Forrest J. Ackerman, Sam Moskowitz and others, including this columnist. An unusual device, known as the "Reflectoroscope," will be utilized to display to the vast audience such rarities as the first issues of *Weird Tales*, *Amazing*, *Wonder*, *Astounding*, *Magic Carpet*, and so on. Also "screened" will be the earliest of all fanzines such as *The Comet*, *The Time Traveler*, *Science Fiction Digest*, and many more. Here is your chance to actually see these almost legendary items.

Another feature will be the presentation of the Achievement Awards. Formal recognition will be given to the best editor, author, artist, and fan editor. You can vote your choice if you are a member of the Convention Committee—even if you can't attend the convention.

Send \$2 right now to the 13th World Science Fiction Convention. You will receive all publications and information concerning the affair which have been issued this year. Ben Jason is the Treasurer and the address is PO Box 508, Edgewater Branch, Cleveland, Ohio.

The Scientifilms: Watch for what is alleged to be David Niven's best role in 20 years, "Around the World in Eighty Days." The Jules Verne classic will be a high-budget picture, with the company shooting all over the world for five months. Niven plays Phineas Fogg, of course. ...Special effects for the climax of *Pacemaker's* first scientifilm, "The Beast With 1,000,000 Eyes," cost \$5000. *Spaceway* art editor Paul Blaisdell built and animated the monster. ...Paul Douglas is now starring in an s-f thriller called "The Gamma People". ...Producer-Director Victor Sherman can't make up his mind! He's going to shoot a scientifilm, but has to decide among "Slan," "Shadows in the Sun," "The Transposed Man," and the old classic, "The Return of George Washington". ...Ray Bradbury's "Fahrenheit 45°" will be presented on TV in September. Check your channels for the exact time and date. ...Speaking of TV, don't miss Ivan Tors' "Science Fiction Theater." It's on film, weekly—thirty minutes; although the plots are rather basic, the shows are well-done.

Save Your Confederate Dollars: The success of the First Southeastern Science Fiction Conference (held in Atlanta last April 2 and 3) has resulted in a decision to hold a Southern conference annually. The second

will be in Charlotte, North Carolina; although no definite date has been set as yet, it will probably occur in March or April.

The recent Atlanta affair was highlighted by speeches by Dr. Harold W. Ritchey, assistant manager and technical director of the Thiokol Corporation, Huntsville, Alabama, and prominent s-f writer Theodore Cogswell. Dr. Ritchey spoke on the five-stage propellant moon rocket (stating that a beer can can be shot to the moon right now!) and Cogswell dwelt on the literary aspects of science fiction and the battle it has fought for literary recognition.

Ian Macauley, President of the Atlanta S-F Organization, was Chairman, and Robert A. Madie, President of the Charlotte S-F Society, was publicity director. The forthcoming Charlotte affair will see Macauley and Madie switch positions: the former publicity director, the latter Chairman. By the time this appears in print, a definite date and conference hotel will have been announced. All interested fans are invited to send \$1 registration fee (to help cover preliminary expenses, advertising literature, etc.) to this writer, address at bottom of fanzine review section.

News and Views: Dave Jenrette (formerly known in fandom as Jen Hammond) has sold a novelette to *Planet Stories*. Marion Zimmer Bradley is his collaborator. And Agent Ackerman enthuses over Jenrette's latest, a "shaggy-dog" sort of yarn. ...Theodore Cogswell is planning on re-writing his Atlanta conference speech for pro-mag publication. ...*Week-End Magazine*, Sunday supplement of the *New York Post*, has been featuring science fiction lately. Stories by Asimov, Bradbury, Porges, Ackerman, and Clarke having appeared. ...A dispatch from Moscow claims the Soviet Union is considering a plan to explore the moon with a radio-controlled tank. The tank, after being transported to the moon via rocket-ship, would transmit lunar pictures back to earth. The dispatch states human beings will be on the moon in about two years. ...And columnist Stewart Alsop maintains the USA will launch a small earth-satellite next year. Nothing elaborate, the satellite will be about the size of a football and will cost about \$20 million—peanuts to the Pentagon.

The Pocketbooks: Several months ago rumors were rampant about the s-f field concerning Ballantine Books. Ballantine had set its sights too high, it was claimed. And, for a time, it appeared that BB had gone the way of all pulp. However, Ballantine is back again—stronger than ever, it would seem. During the past two months BB has issued a William Tenn collection, "Of All Possible Worlds;" "Beyond Eden," an original by David Duncan; and a reprint of the Pohl-Kornbluth *Galaxy* serial, "Gladiator at Law." Coming up soon from BB are a selection by Anthony Boucher and a Chad Oliver

collection. ...The latest Ace Double-Novel consists of a Philip K. Dick original, "Solar Lottery," combined with a Leigh Brackett reprint, "The Big Jump". ...Richard Matheson, whose "I Am Legend" was one of the most discussed books of 1954, has clicked again at Gold Medal with another novel, "The Shrinking Man."

THE FAN PRESS

THERE ARE a great number of fanzines being published right now. That statement certain surprises no one. But have you ever wondered just how many amateur science fiction publications are issued during any one period? Well, we always knew there were at least thirty or forty, but had no idea as to how many there *actually* are. Russell K. Watkins has settled the question most emphatically: he compiled a list of all fanzines published during the past year, and came up with the downright stunning total of *one hundred and thirty*. This, of course, includes all the one-shots, annuals, bi-annuals—as well as those published with some degree of regularity. Those of you who are properly awed can probably get a copy of Watkins' list by writing him at 110 Brady Street, Savannah, Georgia.

Of the entire 130, one of the very best is *Grue* (25¢ a copy from Dean A. Grennell, 402 Maple Avenue, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin). Grennell's publication is consistently excellent in all phases: format, quality, and quantity. "*Grue* is printed on a Gestetner—a sort of mimeograph with delusions of grandeur." And issue #23 opens up with one of James Blish's rare excursions into fanzines: a semi-humorous article which reveals just what goes on behind the scenes in a writer's agency. You know: the type of agency which advertises in all the magazines and asks, "Who Says You Can't Write?"

Wilson "Bob" Tucker pens a column with the rather unorthodox title of "The Chameleon Equine," in which he talks of his beginnings in s-f fandom. By employing the scientific method, he traces his fannish birth to a 1932 issue of *Astounding* and to a fanzine (then known as "fan mag") he published in that Conklin-despised year. Then there are a dozen pages of Grennell's "Miscellania," as well as fillers by Robert Bloch, Harlan Ellison, and Redd Boggs, plus Bob Silverberg's rib-tickling take-off on Ray Bradbury, "And the Moon Be Still as Cheddar." In summary: *Grue* is tops!

And we have received another issue of *Dimensions* (write to Harlan Ellison, 12701 Shaker Boulevard, Apt. #616, Cleveland 20, Ohio, for information). This glant of the fanzines can hard be placed in the "fanzine category" at all. It is an obvious attempt to publish a pro-zine in mimeoed format. There are 90 large pages of just about everything conceivable. Poul Anderson and Marion Zimmer Bradley have stories; Algis Budrys, Theodore Cogawell, Theodore Stur-



geon, and Julian May Diky compose science fiction ballads; and there are all sorts of columns and departments, the most controversial being "From Where I Sit," by "Harold Van Dall," who is one of New York's leading science fiction writers. Editor Ellison won't tell who he is. However, a study of his column combined with other observation and detection can lead to but one conclusion: he is not only one of New York's leading s-f writers, but he is one of the brightest of the newer group—and a former fan. Inasmuch as no one has appeared to have uncovered Mr. Van Dall's identity, we shan't expose him here. But we might say, Congratulations, "Harold," on your recent merger.

Also featured in this monstrous issue are Damon Knight with a trio of discerning book reviews, reviewed in the typical Damon Knight manner, and, according to editor Ellison, "...stolen out literally from under the nose of Robert W. Lowndes..." (Bob, that'll teach you to be more observant when permitting s-f fans access to your editorial offices.) Ellison has stories by Mack Reynolds and Randall Garrett on tap for next issue: wonder whose nose he stole those out from under?

First issues of fanzines are usually noted for being completely non-note-worthy. Distinctly not so with *Vagabond* (no price listed, but a quarter should net you a copy from John W. Murdock, 214 East 11th Street, Kansas City 6, Missouri).

The initial fat issue (50 large, well-mimeographed pages) is already equal to all but a few of the top zines being published. Jim Tibbitts, Jr. appears with a very pertinent inquiry into modern science fiction, aptly titled, "Alas, All Stagnating!" Mr. Tibbitts says he is fed up with contemporary "milk and water" sf, and longs for the return of the E. E. Smith, Ray Cummings, Otis A.

Kline brand of science fiction. He further states that he would "...far rather see an illustration by Paul, Dold or Wesso than be confronted with a view of the UN from somebody's window..."

He also observes the reviewing tactics of some of the "experts" in the field who, when they do condescend to mention an s-f book written before 1940, "...will gleefully inform their readers of all the drawbacks of the story in question (without mentioning the merits), and infer that the publisher is insane to reprint and the prospective buyer even nuttier to throw away money on the product." It has always occurred to us that Groff Conklin, in particular, falls into this category. Conversely, P. Schuyler Miller invariably presents impartial reviews of pre-1940 science fiction. Of course, the fact that Miller has been active in the field almost since the dawn of magazine science fiction might possibly have a bearing on this. Conklin, despite the numerous anthologies he has edited, is a comparative Johnny-Come-Lately.

Vagabond contains quite a few other items of general reader interest, such as a bibliography of almost-unheard of H. P. Lovecraft writings from the amateur press, by the Lovecraft bibliophile extraordinary, George T. Wetzel, as well as book and fanzine reviews, departments and a trio of stories. Send for a sample copy—you're bound to like it!

A serious commentary on the fantasy field is the bi-monthly, photo-offset *Inside* 25¢ from Ron Smith, 510 West 113th Street, Room 407, New York 25, New York). In the current issue the editor forcefully decries the trend toward censorship and thought-control, and has some very unkind words for the liberals who "...aren't doing anything about reforming the reformers." Mark Clifton, in his article, "But They Want to Write Them," replies to Bill Hamling (editor of *Imagination*) who, in a previous issue, maintained that science fiction is written for entertainment only. Clifton says, "...certain editorial viewpoints are choking and destroying the very thing they wish to advance—science fiction." (It appears that time has vindicated Sam Moskowitz. He had been—up until quite recently—fighting almost alone against modern science fictional trends. Now he has many s-f connoisseurs in his corner—with the number increasing daily.)

William I. Freeman dogmatically states that the most popular science fiction magazine ever published was the digest *Fantastic*. (Not the *Fantastic* of today, but the one with gaily colored illustrations, no departments, and many non-fantasy stories.) Freeman titles his article, "A Bloody Fight"—and we're quite sure he'll bloody well get one. Book reviews, an article on Arthur J. Burks ("The Hack Prolific"), and a pictorial "Story of the Future" round out a very commendable issue.

The latest issue (#19) of *Psychotic* maintains the high level established by preceding issues. (Editor Geis, 1525 N. E. Ainsworth, Portland 11, Oregon, will mail a copy free to anyone requesting one.) Peter Graham continues his lengthy San Francisco Convention report and Bob Silverberg tells why he no longer publishes his fanzine, *Spaceship*, as a subscription fanzine. Columnist Vernon L. McCain (who can always be counted on for a well-written, meaty, and often controversial article, defends the super-active fan who is so immersed in science fiction that it has become his way of life. "What's wrong with fandom as a way of life?" asks Vernon. Robert Bloch (fandom's most prolific writer) appears with a parody on Lewis Carroll.

Psychotic, in its brief two-year existence, has carved a niche for itself among the really good fanzines of the past two decades. Now Editor Geis informs us that *Psychotic* (per se) has seen its last issue. Hereafter, it will be replaced by a new, serious, constructive magazine, *Science Fiction Review*. As much as we hate to see one of our favorites disappear, it must be admitted that the new magazine, as described, is one that's sorely needed in the science fiction world. *Review* will be a magazine which the general reader of science fiction will be able to thoroughly understand immediately upon reading his first issue. It will be a throwback to the fanzines of the 1930's in that science fiction itself will be the primary topic of discussion. It will be comprised of news and gossip columns, book and professional magazine reviews, articles and letters. Best of luck, Dick, with the new venture!

Capsule Reviews:

Varioso (10¢ from John Magnus, 203 Noah, Oberlin, Ohio). Mimeographed, well-edited, and worth sampling. Issue #13 features an off-trail story by Jim Harmon, a column by Philip Paige, and an article which takes you "Inside 'Inside Science Fiction'" by yours truly.

Merlin (only 5¢ from Lee Anne Tremper, 1022 N. Tuxedo Street, Indianapolis 1, Indiana). This one features book reviews and columns on pocket books and foreign science fiction. It contains a lot of useful information for collectors. Dave Jenrette's cartoons add zest to *Merlin's* appearance. A real bargain.

Galleon of Dream (a brochure of poetry by Lin Carter, Apartment 4, 50 Morning-side Drive, New York 28, New York). This is a beautiful piece of work, illustrated profusely by the author, containing poems of legend, of the world of make-believe, and of the mystical orient. Poetry lovers will enjoy this most attractive pamphlet. 50¢ from the author.

Send copies of your publications to Robert A. Madie, 1620 Anderson Street, Charlotte 5, North Carolina.



NOOGLES HAVE TO EXPLAIN

... and we're not sure we're glad he did!

by S. S. BOREN

DEAR EDITOR:

As a noogle, I am a gleb; and as a gleb, I am proud of it. Be that as it may, if you do not appreciate my manner of writing, that is your prerogative. If you wish to reject my story, as well, that also is within your discretion.

You noted on the rejection slip that my characters are impossible and my plot is pure corn. Of course. But that is the way of life. And that is what I was writing about. Life.

Not only that, but my story was a true story. The facts were all taken from first-hand information; and the hero, who was a noogle, needless to say, was I. Not even the names were changed.

When I was six months old, my father ran away with a furry white caruna fruina of the female gender, who had a souvenir concession on a planetoid near Delta II in Sector XII.

My mother was so heartbroken that she took an overdose of cosmic rays and converted into a stream of electrons.

There I was. A mere infant. An orphan. And all alone.

To survive was simple enough. All that was necessary was to absorb my daily quota of neutrons and my weekly jag of cosmic rays. But what about my life as an inhuman being? Where was the love and affection and guidance so desperately needed by a child of tender months?

Can you imagine a noogle, a member of one of the proudest races in the

universe, growing up to become a delinquent? It is unbearably unthinkable.

This had never happened to a noogle before, and I was certain that in reading my manuscript you would feel the tremendous impact of this situation.

How I grew up to be a fine, upstanding ovoid of molecules is amazing when you realize that I did all by myself.

Of course, I must admit that I would never have had the drive, the compulsion and inspiration, if it were not for Gereenemenee.

Just visualize the sexiest glob of molecular activity that you could ever hope to get a high voltage drop from, and that is her.

When she came along one gloomy spacial-period and said, "Splurt", that was the beginning of a new life for me.

I was a year old when Gereenemenee and I left Sector IX on our pre-marital excursion and teleported ourselves to your planet Earth. The experience was educational as well as astounding.

In spite of what we learned on your planet, we were still determined to conceive our children in the normal noogle manner. We returned thereafter to Sector IX, exchanged electronic emissions and were pronounced gleb and glob.

IT WAS AT this important stage of neutron extension that my father, curse his molecular disorientation, decided to leave his furry concubine and return to our Sector.

"Son," he told me. "I've seen life

and I've got a lot to tell you. Be content with your own little glob, and do not desire another's feminine nucleonic distribution, even if she is stacked like a brick-ionizer."

"Dad," I asked coldly, ignoring his crude gem of wisdom. "Why did you leave your little planetoid paradise?"

"Because, son," he replied, almost weeping. "Unbeknownst to me my little furry white caruna fruina became fertile and she split down the middle into two little furry white caruna fruinas, both of the female gender. I did not mind her infidelity. I loved her deeply. Yes, son, I really did."

"But what I did mind was that she, or they, split again and again and again. I soon found myself living with little furry white caruna fruinas too numerous to count. I could not stand the pace. My electronic count fell and my molecular pattern was breaking down. I had to leave before I became completely dissipated."

"So here I am, and I am ready to start all over again. I hope that your mother will not be too angry with me."

"No, she won't," I said, with grief and bereavement. "Because mother has joined the endless stream; mother is no longer a singular entity; mother is gone."

His reaction, I must admit, surprised me more than a little. "No!" he cried. "Do you mean that I drove her to it? No!"

He looked at me as if I would tell him that it was not his fault.

"Of course, it was all my fault," he said, emitting sparks of stored up emotion. "Good-by, son. I must cogitate in solitude."

"Good-by," I said, knowing only too well what his cogitation would lead him to.

It was just a short time later that father took an overdose of cosmic rays.

LIFE COULD have been complete in spite of the unpleasant memories that haunted my subconscious, but

the unforeseen is always with us.

My marriage was never consummated. Gereenemence—my dream, my inspiration, my life—suddenly and, without any outward manifestation that she was ever inclined to do so, ran off with a furry white caruna fruina of the male gender.

Now you know the whole sordid affair, the tremendous tragedy of my life. Can you still say that the plot is pure corn?

Naturally, I can understand your doubting some of the happenings and some of the activities that took place. But we have abilities that you Earth beings do not have; just as you have abilities that we do not have.

If I can teleport myself through space and time, isn't that just as plausible as your ability to gorge yourself with what I consider to be all kinds of poisonous materials?

If I can exist quite well on a diet of neutrons, isn't that as acceptable as your ability to inhale noxious gasses?

If I can pass through solid objects, isn't that as bad as your not being able to do the same?

Your ways of life are even more ridiculous than mine; but I accept them as real and genuine, because I have seen them.

Yet, you refuse to accept the obvious, the plain unadulterated facts of my existence.

You also wrote, "*This is the sloppiest manuscript I have ever seen. It looks as if it was typed by a two-year-old!*"

Well, for glob sakes! How old do you think I am?"

It is bad enough being a noogle and not having any arms or legs. And not having hardly any earthly substance at all.

But can you ever conceive in that materialistic human mind of yours how difficult it is to type these things? Without a typewriter?

Yours very truly,
Ncle Nowhr



Naturally, this kind of business had to be done on the side.



SALVAGE

by LEE PRIESTLY

STEVE YAWNED and knuckled his chin reflectively. Then he doused his cigaret in the dregs of his coffee and yawned again.

"I'd better get back," he told the counterman in the dingy coffee pot. "Not that there's much doing at the yard this time of night, but somebody might throw a bridge over the hot wires and try to carry off the stock."

The counterman swiped languidly with a gray rag, then came to lean on the pie case. "You lose much that way?" he asked around the toothpick in his mouth.

"Oh, lord, yes. Partly because of this location. I might lose less if I moved up town, but the class of trade I get wouldn't follow me up there. No use me going up where the big money is. The guys and gals with dough don't

bother with second-hand parts; they just turn in the old model."

"You're right about that. I seen a guy down town last week with one of them custom made bodies." The counterman sighed enviously. "I dunno what there was about it...kinda different shape here and there...but, man, the crowd was sure giving him the eye. It would sure be something to toot around looking sharp like that."

"Costs aplenty, too."

The counterman leaned closer to speak in confidence. "Listen Steve, you're bound to get some good ones once in a while. How's to let me know when a clean—"

Steve laughed without amusement. "You and nine thousand other guys. I don't handle many whole bodies

anyhow." He slid off the stool and bending a stick of gum into three poked it into his mouth.

"Who's talking about bodies. Oh, sure, I was, but I know them custom jobs is outa my reach. I just want to repair the old model. I'll make it worth your while. Slip you a little somethin' above the standard price."

"Hal! If I told you half the offers I get—" Steve reached out and lightly punched the counterman's shoulder. "But for an old friend I'll keep my eyes open."

He shook a toothpick out of an empty hot sauce bottle and sauntered out, the screen door whapping behind him. It was a nice night with little clouds chasing each other across the moon. The only sounds were some amorous cats down the alley and the grinding crash of cars meeting head on over on the Super Speedway. Probably some juveniles playing Chicken or Ditch'em. Steve hoped they didn't call for his wrecker. You could pick up parts cheap like that, lordy, what a mess. There'd been talk about a law to prohibit kid car games but the Interchangeable Parts lobby had gone into action fast against it. You couldn't blame them. Prohibition would cut off both supply and demand.

Two customers were waiting at the little box of an office, whose door was never closed day or night. Any money whooshed into a pneumatic tube that delivered it to a bank and the parts on display weren't worth smashing the cases to get. So anyone could hang around as long as he could stand the ad-casters blating and twining in multi-colored neon: "Deal with the Daffiest Dealer in Town! Steve Pays Highest! Sells Lowest!"

THE MAN was first. It was easy to see what he needed... Sprung Frame... Knee Action repair.

"How can I serve you, friend?" Steve asked, wondering if the guy could even make a down payment.

"I probably can't afford all I need," the man began.

"Why not take advantage of our low-price self-service?" This guy might be willing to strip out the parts himself. Some of those old bodies looked bad now that they were pretty well peeled out. A week ago, Steve had earmarked a load for the furnaces and hadn't gotten around to taking them. "It's kinda messy, but not near as bad as you'd think. And we furnish you a tool kit."

The man thought about it. "Well... okay, I'll take a stab at it."

When the man, plus tool kit, had gone off to the far corner where the nearly stripped bodies were racked, Steve gave his attention to the woman. He could see what she wanted, too. One look at the brassy hair, the voluptuous body with the indefinable blur of hard use, the weary eyes in a face pseudo-youthful by grace of plastic surgery made it an easy guess. And she probably could pay for it. Steve appraised the diamonds on her over-manicured hands and leaned over the counter.

"Now what can I do for you, Ma'am? A nice clean job that hasn't been misused?"

"I can't find a thing at the first class—" She stopped and gave him a knowing look from the hard eyes. "Not even at the price I'm prepared to pay. I thought you might get something in from the country, say."

Steve leaned closer. "How about a little deal we picked up from an old maid school teacher's estate?"

She wanted to believe him. "If you have it... why, that would be worth—"

"You took the words right outa my mouth." Steve winked at her meaningly. "I'd have to protect myself, of course, this merchandise being kind of warm."

Mentally, he checked over the stock. There wasn't anything from an old maid school teacher's estate, of course, but if this dame wanted to believe it... For a moment he dallied with the notion of selling her the only good

thing he had in stock. He'd picked it up after a four way Chicken game. The girl who'd owned it had put mighty little mileage on it, and while there'd been the hell of a smashup most of the assemblies were practically as good as new. He'd play this customer a little, get her really snapping at the bait.

"I halfway promised it to a lady that's willing to spend real dough." He shot a glance at the avid eyes. "All cash."

"I can pay," she told him. She was hooked now. "How much?"

Steve shook his head. "I couldn't give you a price until I see if I can eel out of this other deal. But I'd sure like for you to have it. Can you come back tomorrow? And you understand I can't give no guarantees."

HE WAS stuffing the earnest money she'd pressed upon him into his wallet when he heard the noise. Without moving his head he eyed the dimness bordered by the back fence.

There was a shoving sound; that would be the bridge over the hot wires. Then a thud... heavy. Another thud... light. A shadow moved inside the fence.

Steve began to whistle and went into the office. There he hunched down behind the show cases and stole out of a side door. At the corner, he stood in the shadow of the building. Careful steps tiptoed. Then he lunged and grabbed.

The shadow fought him like a tiger... maybe a kind of small tiger... more like a desperate alley cat. Steve accumulated scratches and a painfully bitten finger before he got an arm around the kid's neck and squeezed... He'd caught a girl. She stopped struggling and stood with a terrible docility, her sobs shaking her hunched shoulders.

"Hey, it can't be all that bad," Steve said, cautiously releasing her.

"Go on, call the police. What are you waiting for?" he asked.

Her hand dropped to her pocket with

a casualness that was in itself a flaring danger signal. So Steve was ready for the speed with which her withdrawn fingers flew to her mouth. He chopped down on her wrist to send the capsule spinning into the darkness. She really wept then, tears rolling down her cheeks in moon-silvered rills.

Steve steered her to a bench against the back wall where there was light enough for him to see what her face had to say and dimness enough to encourage her to say it. She was a pretty kid, a little older than he'd first thought.

"C'mon now," he cajoled; "tell Uncle Steve all about it."

Catching her breath on a sob, she shook her head. Steve probed gently.

"You don't think you're the first one to try this, do you? Nearly every night I get 'em. My best source—" He stopped. No use telling her about his business. "Kids have a smashup and have to buy salvaged parts for repair before the folks find out."

He waited a moment. Now this one wasn't scared of what Pop and Mom would say... or that wasn't all she was scared of. Her sobbing stopped and she listened to him on an indrawn breath. "I'm gettin' warm," Steve told himself. He took her left hand in his and let his thumb find the fourth finger. No rings... but there was the indentation. She'd left them home.

"Young wives, too," he said, "that have to get repaired before hubby gets back from a long trip." He threw the question in casually, "Where's your lad been this time?"

Bill wasn't due back from Venus for six months," she said. "I would have had time— The message came three days ago. He's been called back to headquarters, will be in next week—" She stopped abruptly, her eyes big and dark with fright searching Steve's face.

"Relax, sister, If I talked I'd be outa business and in jail so fast it would give us both vertigo. And like I say,

you're not the first by some several. Only why did you come in over the wire?"

"I spent most of the money I had at legitimate places. Before I saw they were just passing me on."

STEVE SWORE under his breath. Self-righteous so-and-sos! But a cautious thought made him put the next question. "How'd you happen to come here? Did anyone tell you about me?"

"No, no one told me. I thought I could... steal from you easier because you're open at night."

She was probably almost certainly—lying, Steve thought. The word got around about extra-legit sales— Oh, hell, he told himself wearily, say you're running a black market and quit hiding behind words! Since they'd discovered good preservatives and a method of making all parts and assemblies interchangeable and established the parts banks, they'd tried to control the pieces, too. But the old law of supply and demand was hard to repeal. If you wanted something scarce, you had to pay for it. He turned to the girl.

"Look, kid, I may be able to fix you up." This was the place for the assemblies he'd salvaged from that four way Chicken smash. Fleeting, he regretted the old dame's lettuce; this kid wouldn't have anything like as much. "And I'm softheaded enough to let you pay me when and how you can. But there's no percentage in repeats, you understand. I have to know you won't get yourself in another jam as soon as you wave goodbye to your Bill on his next trip."

She shook her head fiercely. "This wasn't all my fault... except I was stupid. He was a friend of Bill's. He said he only dropped around to keep me from getting lonely. We went swimming and to the amusement arcades. Then one day we were on the beach, and no one was near, and—"

"I can imagine then rest," Steve said dryly.

"He wouldn't help me when I told him, either. And when he knew Bill was coming home unexpectedly, he laughed and said he'd be away for the happy homecoming." Her face and her voice hardened to vindictiveness. "But he didn't laugh long... and he won't be... away."

Steve stared at her. "You mean— hey! Where'd you hide the body?"

She shivered and gestured vaguely toward the fence. "I had an awful time bringing... it... inside. Then I shoved it under some of that stripped-down stuff. I didn't think it would be noticeable there."

A young virile male in good condition! Steve rubbed his hands together. "How'd you clobber him? Knife? Gun? Heart? Head?"

"A gun," she said. "Right between the eyes. He taught me to shoot in the galleries at the amusement arcades."

"Show me where," Steve said, catching her arm.

As she led him between the bodies corded head to foot, he made some rapid calculations. He'd sell the kid the parts she had to have from that youngster of the Chicken game smash. Then he'd sell the interchangeable parts she'd got rid of (complete with contents—that might get into the medical journals!) to the brassy old dame the top price and no guarantees. And there was still the clobbered "friend" to cut up for profits. There was always a waiting list for eyes, of course, and a brisk demand from the skin, and nerve, and bone banks. The real money was made in salvaging vital organs for transplanting.

He wondered how high the counter-man at the coffee pot would go for the good, clean assembly he wanted... No, he could jack up a better price from that official who'd got himself into a very embarrassing fix.

"Step right along, sister," he told the girl with a grin. "We're going to trade to our mutual advantage!"



Index to Volumes 1 and 2

Volume 1: May 1951 — August 1952

ABERNATHY, ROBERT		
Righteous Plague	May 51	75
BEYER, WILLIAM GREY		
Deadly Thinkers, The	May 51	56
BLISH, JAMES		
Science in Science Fiction		
#1 The Biological Story	May 51	89
#2 The Mathematical Story	Aug 51	83
#3 The Astronomical Story	Nov 51	111
#4 The Psychological Story	May 52	49
CLARKE, ARTHUR C.		
Second Dawn	Aug 51	104
COPPEL, ALFRED		
Welcome	Aug 52	108
de CAMP, L. SPRAGUE		
Mountain of Light, The	Aug 52	98
Rogue Princess	Feb 52	60
Wisdom of the Ancients, The	Nov 51	84
del REY, LESTER		
Absolutely No Paradox	May 51	53
Fool's Errand	Nov 51	114
DALY, HAMLIN		
Seven Securities, The	Aug 52	40
DYE, CHARLES		
Alien Restoration	Aug 52	105
FYFE, H. B.		
Extra-Secret Agent	May 52	78
GARSON, VASELEOS		
Goblin Planetoid	Aug 52	81
GIBSON, JOE		
Three Worlds in Shadow	Feb 52	8
GILGANNON, DANIEL R.		
Stopwatch on the World	May 51	32
HENDERSON, GENE L.		
Survival of the Fittest	Nov 51	94
JAMES, EDWIN		
Sun Came Up Last Night, The	Aug 51	8
KENNEDY, JOQUEL		
No More Pencils, No More Books	Aug 51	90
KLASS, MORTON		
Altruist, The	Aug 51	99
KUBILIUS, WALTER		
Turn Backward, O Time!	May 51	102
LESSER, MILTON		
Ordeal on Syrtis	Feb 52	97
Wild Talents, Inc.	Aug 52	68
LIDDELL, C. H.		
We Shall Come Back	Nov 51	8
LOMBINO, S. A.		
Reaching for the Moon	Nov 51	117
Silent Partner	Aug 52	118
LOWNDES, ROBERT W.		
It Says Here	May 51	ff
As I was Saying	Aug 51	ff
Way I Saw It, The	Nov 51	98

MacCREIGH, JAMES		
Danger Moon	Aug 51	88
MacLEAN, KATHERINE		
Communicado	Feb 52	88
MARLOWE, STEPHEN		
Fugue	Nov 51	68
MORRISON, WILLIAM		
Luckiest Man Alive, The	May 52	96
MOORE, WARD		
We, the People	May 52	101
NELSON, EUGENE W.		
Black Magic of Yesterday, The	May 52	106
PHILLIPS, ROG		
All the Answers	Aug 52	12
PRICE, E. HOFFMANN		
When in Doubt, Mutate!	May 52	54
SHAW, LARRY		
Seeds of Insecurity	Aug 51	72
SHERMAN, MICHAEL		
Intervention	Feb 52	105
SMITH, GEORGE O.		
Atomic Bonanza	May 51	92
Black Alarm, The	Nov 51	28
Book Review	Aug 51	86
TENN, WILLIAM		
Matter of Frequency, A	May 51	111
VALE, RENA M.		
Shining City, The	May 52	10
WALTON, BRYCE		
Star Bright	May 51	116
WEST, WALLACE		
Belt, The	Nov 51	56
No War Tomorrow	May 51	8

Volume 2: November 1952 — February 1954

ABERNATHY, ROBERT		
Four Commandments, The	Feb 53	27
Lifework	May 53	54
ANDERSON, POUL		
Green Thumb, The	Feb 53	12
BAILEY, WILLIAM C.		
Mud Puppy, The	May 53	82
Prowler, The	Nov 52	68
BECK, CALVIN THOMAS		
Melting Pot, The	May 53, Aug 53, Nov 53	
BINDER, EANDO		
Monster Or—The Monster, The	Feb 54	63
BLISH, JAMES		
Common Time	Aug 53	34
CHRISTOPHER, JOHN		
Aristotle	Feb 53	105
CLARESON, TOM		
Evolution of Science Fiction, The	Aug 53	85
COPPEL, ALFRED		
Defender of the Faith	Nov 52	59
COX Jr., IRVING E.		
Children of Thon, The	Feb 54	8
de CAMP, L. SPRAGUE		
Book Reviews	Aug 53, Nov 53	
Golden Mirage, The	May 53	76
Great Charlatans, The	Feb 53	95
Stars in Their Courses, The	Feb 54	45
del REY, LESTER		
Book Review	Nov 52	57
DANELAW, JOHN		
Architect of Chaos	Nov 53	46
DICK, PHILLIP K.		
World She Wanted, The	May 53	43
DYE, CHARLES		
Curtain in the Sky	Nov 53	64
Escape Valve	Feb 53	59

Time Goes to Now	May 53	99
FRITCH, CHARLES R.		
Dry Spell, The	Feb 54	52
FUGATE, FRANCIS L.		
Horatio, the Creator	Nov 52	107
GARRETT, RANDALL		
Characteristics: Unusual	Aug 53	99
GRINNELL, DAVID		
Last Stand of a Space Grenadier	Feb 54	57
JONES, RAYMOND F.		
Intermission Time	May 53	12
KNIGHT, DAMON		
Book Reviews	Feb 53, Aug 53	
LESSER, MILTON		
Halt the Blue Star's Rising	Aug 53	99
Irrationals, The	Nov 53	10
LIDDELL, C. H.		
Visitors, The	May 53	109
LOWNDES, ROBERT W.		
Book Review	Aug 53	69
It Says Here	Nov 52	11
Way I Saw It, The	Nov 53	45
MADLE, ROBERT A.		
Book Review	Aug 53	69
Edgar Allan Poe—Ancestor	May 53	71
(with Sam Moskowitz)		
Did Science Fiction Predict Atomic Energy?	Nov 53	81
MERRIL, JUDITH		
Little Knowledge, A	Feb 53	83
MORRISON, WILLIAM		
(with Harry Nix)		
Scent of Danger	Nov 52	89
MOSKOWITZ, SAM		
(with Robert A. Madle)		
Did Science Fiction Predict Atomic Energy?	Nov 53	81
NIX, HARRY		
(with William Morrison)		
Scent of Danger	Nov 52	89
OTTUM, ROBERT K.		
She Called Me Frankie	May 53	40
REYNOLDS, MACK		
Advice From Tomorrow	Aug 53	75
RUSSELL, ERIC FRANK		
Timeless Ones, The	Nov 52	12
SCHMIDT, RAY EARL		
Transmissible Matter, A	Feb 54	34
SHAW, LARRY		
Captive Audience, The	Nov 52	26
STEARNS, CHARLES A.		
Mercury Bill & The Amorous Hunk	Nov 53	37
TERZIAN, RICHARD		
Last Robot, The	Nov 52	106
YOUNG, ROBERT F.		
Audience Reaction	Feb 54	74
WALTON, BRYCE		
Dreadful Therapy	Aug 53	10
Last Hero, The	Feb 54	68
Myth-Makers, The	Nov 53	73
WHITE, W. MALCOLM		
Shoo Fly!	Feb 53	115
Signpost in the Sky	Nov 52	101



A Department of Letters and Comment

As I Was Saying...

SUCH DISSENT as there was, was strong—but Sam Merwin's "Eye in the Window" still won the most acclaim from you readers. Joe L. Hensley came in second with "The Red and the Green", with oldtimer Russ Winterbotham's "Gladsome Planet" a close third; Robert Abernathy's "The Guzzler" wasn't far behind. "You Risk Your Life" by Joseph Slotkin and "The Sedulous Apes" by Dennis Wiegand, were about evenly divided between the roses and the bricks; they finished in the lower brackets since the other four stories were more widely liked.

In the letter-ratings, Jim Blish, Warren F. Link, and Gilbert E. Menicucci will receive originals for their efforts.

The question of long or short letters arises again; and since this is your department, the editor will keep his cotton-pickin' hands out of the question. If enough of you will state your views so that I can see a majority—or even a definite plurality—either way, I'll be guided accordingly.

About letters: as I've stated before, I *prefer* to see them typed, double-space; and if you have a typewriter, I'd really appreciate your not using both sides of the sheet. That's because while I can send a single-space sheet off to the printer now and then, the printers won't accept matter typed on both sides of the paper. Now I don't mind typing an interesting letter that comes in clearly handwritten, but it's something of a strain to retype a typewritten communication where the writer didn't use separate sheets for each page. So give me a break on that count, won't you please?

ADMIRATION FOR EMSH

Dear Editor:

The cover by Emsh on the May issue of SFQ sold me the magazine. The emotion portrayed in that picture compelled me to stop and wonder what it was all about. Although I have looked at that cover many times, each time I look at it, I have a new set of ideas as to what the young man in

the picture sees and feels. That's what I like about Emsh's pictures. They are a constant challenge to the reader's imagination. His pictures have an intangible aliveness, and an intriguing quality about them which few artists capture.

There are several fine artists in the science fiction field, but for my money Emsh tops them all. I never purchased science fiction magazines until he hit that field

with his drawings of peculiar-looking little creatures and his emotional portrayals. Now, I find myself hunting the magazine stalls, thumbing through science fiction publications, looking for an Emsch picture. When I do find it, I buy the magazine, and complete the deal by reading the stories and most of the other features. In fact, I'm a science fiction fan now, and enjoy being one.

—S. MacLELLAN, 214 Hillmore Drive,
Silver Spring, Md.

The results don't always show it, but buckets of sweat, blood, and tears go into the covers on the part of artists, art department, publisher, and editor alike. So we all get a real lift when someone writes in to say he liked a cover; then we all pray that the sales figures will show that thousands of other readers agreed.

REBUTTAL

Dear Bob,

I suppose I should accept one of your statements in the May *Science Fiction Quarterly* as it stands, since it sort of indicates I am a "natural genius" but I can't. I do not believe that with rare exceptions "no writer in his teens, or twenties, etc., with a background of school, plus intense reading of science fiction magazines, and perhaps a splurge of fan activity, has anything to say".

To attempt the foothold of your granted exception, I will say that I am a 21 year old writer *without* the background of school. Asthma and rheumatic fever kept me out most of my time. Though I got to high school, my total schooling couldn't be over three or four years. Of course, I have read science fiction intensely for 13 years and have been on a splurge of fan activity for 8 years. Whether I have had anything to say is naturally a matter of opinion, but I have at least done a good job in so fooling part of the people part of the time. Of my five published stories during my first professional year, reader reaction indicated three first place positions and one tie for second. I am egotistically and inordinately proud of that second place tie in SFQ, not only because of the quality of the opposition but because mine was a short competing against three novelets; and as you know, traditionally the longest story comes in first, the second longest second, etc.

But there are certainly bigger exceptions to your statement than I, and you granted exceptions, didn't you? You made a generalized statement. I'll make one: "There is virtually no editor or author in his thirties who will not say that there is no writer in his teens or twenties who has anything to say." This is a physiological response that men have written books about. Our culture is so immaturely based on youth that no human, regardless of his talents and intelligence, can help doubting himself when he spots the first gray hair at the temple—at

least subconsciously. The man of thirty, forty, fifty, etc. can only find security in underestimating and underselling youth. Youth, equally insecure because of its lack of experience, often does the same for age. When you get down to the unemotional facts, they are: there isn't that much difference between youth and physical maturity. The capacities for intelligence are relatively the same and the difference in the range of human experience isn't that vast. "When you've seen one nude, you've seen them all."

Children are kept children longer than any other time in history today by the requirements of higher education. As recently as colonial times in America, a boy of eleven was considered of marriageable age and at fourteen he was an unquestioned adult—even when it came to voting if he was a landholder or son of one—regardless of the technicalities of law.

I could point out all sorts of outstanding human beings who did their greatest work during your "mute" period, such as Galileo, Edison, Mary Shelly but they would only be exceptions, maybe irrelevant ones, but I think you indicated *all* youth, not just science fiction writers, so I'm defending it all.

I'll make my point more relevant to the original subject, and it won't concern exceptions. Who are the "hottest" writers in science fiction today? I would say Charles Beaumont, Richard Matheson, Robert Sheckley, *all* in your "mute" period. There are also Alfred Bester and Philip Jose Farmer but in some ways I think the first mentioned three are even "hotter" properties. I know you don't think too much of Bradbury, but if his stories are any good at all, they were best when he was younger, in his twenties. I am emotionally fond of Bradbury (and how else can you be fond of his work?) but his recent anthology "Golden Apples Of The Sun" was a bad book of hardly more than inbred stylings. His latest story in *Star Science Fiction Stories* #8 was even worse. I'm not saying Ray is washed up, but he is going through a stage. Everyone else was singing "Dixie", and he was whistling "Dance Macabre" through his teeth. He's still whistling through his teeth, but now it's "Dixie". I think he will eventually return to those qualities that made his work good and fine, the qualities he had in his youth when he was closer to that childhood he so worships and fears.

Bradbury is hardly an exception—all of the old "masters" have sunk into a recession. I think the same reasons may be applied to Henry Kuttner, Robert Heinlein, A. E. van Vogt and several others are a different matter—I think too much commercial success has left them with too much time on their hands. If they had to live off of what they write now, instead of pocket-book royalties, we would see some great stories from them.

At any rate, what I am trying to prove, in direct refutation of your charge, is that virtually *all* the good writers of science fic-

tion are in their teens or twenties for much of their best period. In short: you can't beat youth—you don't have the time.

I will make one further statement that also has to do with physiological reactions: there is virtually no writer in his teens or twenties who wouldn't have said what I've said in answer to your statement.

And as a minor fellow editor, may I wonder at your working in mysterious ways, your wonders to perform. Is that giant "Quarterly" on the cover supposed to sell magazines? Admittedly to the reader of serious fiction, "Quarterly" suggests a magazine of high literary value but to the average pulp—or I might even say the average magazine reader—all the word will mean is that the magazine comes out four times a year. Perhaps it will also remind newsdealers not to premature the book for three weeks instead of two. At least, it looks nice.

—JIM HARMON, 427 E. 8th Street,
Mt. Carmel, Ill.

P. S.—I seem to have ignored the whole point of your editorial—whether science fiction writers, particularly young ones, have any ability for expression of literary quality. I don't know. I just enjoy science fiction for what it is, whatever it is. But I think your argument was flawed (though not invalidated) by your playing by the *Times'* writer's rules, i. e., that insight into human nature is what all thinking men are interested in. Is that the only thing a thoughtful man is interested in?

I think not. All literature isn't predominantly concerned with psychological insight; there are also mood, ideas and sheer storytelling. You won't gain much added knowledge of human nature from Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, the works of Edgar Allan Poe (with certain exceptions like "William Wilson"), *Treasure Island*, and *Morte de Arthur* but few will deny that they are Literature with a capital L. I think many science fiction stories fall into this class. But the sheer hell of the matter—and I thought we both knew it—is that science fiction is revealing more of human nature than any other contemporary branch of popular or serious fiction, with such skills as the artistry of Theodore Sturgeon and the techniques of Alfred Bester. But they aren't in their twenties, are they? JH

The entire intention of "Limitations of Science Fiction" was to examine the *Times'* assertions on its own grounds, abiding by its own ground rules. Tell you what, Jim; instead of wasting space and wordage arguing the question of youth versus experience (not merely chronological youth versus age), let's wait about twenty years and see if you still agree with your letter of 1955. Matter of fact, I'm willing to take it off the table again in ten years.

AS REQUESTED

Dear Editor:

Since you asked me, I tell you that May
[Turn Page]

There were no glittering cities, no sprawling towns. The future had arrived, and the terrors long dreaded had not. But where could a man like this professor of history fit in? Surely, surely, there must be a need for knowledge of the past—even in a civilization which had gone its



Here is a moving and different story of a new tomorrow

FULL CYCLE

by Clifford D. Simak

THE ORIGINAL

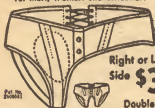
SCIENCE
FICTION

STORIES

Frank Kelly Freas has pointed the cover, and drawn the illustrations for our lead-off story, which appears complete in the November

Immediate Comfort And Relief for You with **RUPTURE-EASER**

A Piper Brace Truss
For MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN



Right or Left
Side \$3.95
Double \$4.95

A strong, form fitting washable support device designed to give you relief and comfort. Adjustable back-lacing and adjustable leg straps. Snaps up in front. Soft flat groin pad—**NO STEEL OR LEATHER BANDS**. Unexcelled for comfort, **INVISIBLE UNDER LIGHT CLOTHING**. Washable. Also used as after operation support.

- **THE MOST EFFECTIVE HERNIA SUPPORT.**
Thousands of people who have tried old-fashioned, expensive devices turn to Rupture-Easer for new comfort.
 - **RUPTURE-EASER IS SANITARY.**
Can be washed without harm to fabric—you never offend when you wear Rupture-Easer.
 - **NO FITTING REQUIRED.**
Just measure around the lowest part of the abdomen and specify right or left side or double.
- Over 1,000,000 Grateful Users**

R. C. of Corvallis, Oregon, Air Mail: "Send me another Rupture-Easer to I will have one to change off with. It is enabling me to work at top speed at my press machine 8 hours a day."
M. S. of Anderson, Ind., thanks us and says: "It is one of the finest things I have ever worn and has made my life worth living. It has given me untold ease and comfort."
O. B. R. of Boston: "Send me another . . . I wish to say to everyone who suffers as I did, 'Oh what relief I have found from its help!'"
Blessed Relief Day and Night—You can sleep in it—you can work in it—you can bathe in it.



10-DAY TRIAL OFFER
Money-back guarantee if you don't get relief.
PIPER BRACE CO., DEPT. DO-115
611 Wyandotte, Kansas City 5, Mo.

RUSH THIS COUPON NOW!

Piper Brace Company, Dept. DO-115
611 Wyandotte, Kansas City 5, Mo.
Please send my RUPTURE-EASER by return mail.
 Right Side ☐ \$3.95 Measure around lowest part of
 Left Side ☐ \$3.95 my abdomen
 Double ☐ \$4.95 is _____ INCHES.
 (Note: Be sure to give Size and Side when ordering.)
 We Prepay Postage except on C.O.D.'s.
 Enclosed is: ☐ Money Order ☐ Check for \$ _____ ☐ Send C.O.D.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City and State _____

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

cover was sure an improvement. But I'll have to confess that after reading a couple of the short stories—specifically "You Risk Your Life" and "The Sedulous Apes"—I'd have forgiven you if the cover hadn't been as good as it was. I think almost anyone who has suffered through the imbecilities of tv audience-participation shows would get a kick out of the Slotkin story, and I for one wouldn't be a bit surprised to see something like that happen. Wiegand's story was a howl from beginning to end. Both of them ought to be anthologized!

Not that the others weren't good; I particularly enjoyed Winterbotham and Hensley, too, but those first two were far ahead of the rest, for me.

There was a bit of solid meat in "Eye in the Window" also, but I get rather tired of Merwin's snobbery. Maybe the common man type of hero has been overdone, but the ultra-slick sophisticated-set type of lead characters don't seem to me to be much of any improvement. La-di-da, shall we have a spot of tea?

—JAMES PARTRIDGE,
Queens Village, NY

Oh come now, what's wrong with a bit of gentility now and then amongst the characters? After all, in a democracy, isn't every man supposed to be a king? Trouble is, even with the money necessary, it takes training!

WELL-WISHER

Dear Mr. Lowndes,

I was a trifle disappointed in the May SFQ; your stories didn't seem to be up to your usual average. Best story in the issue was Joe Hensley's "The Red And The Green", with Slotkin's "You Risk Your Life" coming in a close second. I disliked all of the others. "The Eye in The Window" read as if it had been cut down—rather inexpertly—from a full-length novel. There were just too many characters running around there for a story of that length. The other short stories left me cold. Some of them had good ideas, but none of them had "life".

On the other hand, I liked all the department. Damon Knight is the most entertaining book reviewer in the business; even when I happen to like the book he's tearing apart, I enjoy the review. The editorial was good—I do think 2½ pages is a little long, but all 2½ of them were interesting, which I guess is the main thing. I have always enjoyed "Inside Science Fiction", and I'm sorry to see the "20 Year Ago" part of it dropped. Some of us more recent fans (I came into fandom in '52) enjoyed finding out a few things about the old days in sf. In connection with "Inside Science Fiction", I'd like to thank Madle for his favorable review of *Eisfa*, and make a few corrections; since the issue he reviewed, the mag has added an editor—me—and changed its edi-

[Turn To Page 84]

COMPLETE TOOL SETS AT THE PRICE OF A SINGLE TOOL!

46 Surplus Twist DRILLS \$2



Less than 45¢ each. For hand or electric drills. Brand new, genuine hi-grade, hardened carbon tool steel drills. Sell for up to \$5 in the stores. You get about 6 each of the most frequently used sizes from 1/16" to 1/2". Tempered cutting edges easily bite through steel, aluminum, iron, wood, or plastic. Each drill designed and hardened to give 1000 drillings.

\$2 complete set postpaid

3 pc. ADJUSTABLE WRENCH SET

Fine quality imported German steel. None of highly polished malleable steel. Handle is channelled for easy grip. 6", 8", and 10" wrench is mounted in a steel clip with thumb screw for quick removal or replacement of wrenches.



\$2.98 complete set postpaid

4 pc. CHISEL SET in PLASTIC CASE

True Chisel, Swedish pattern, drop forged from high quality tool steel, tempered and hardened, beveled and polished blades. Straight hardwood handles, leather tipped. Set contains one each 3/8", 1/2", 5/8", and 1" chisel. In separate transparent compartments of strong plastic kit with yellow binding.

\$2.98 complete set postpaid



6 pc. MAGNETIZED SCREW DRIVER SET



Plastic, insulated handles, scientifically designed for a-cup grip. Blades are of highly polished, hardened and tempered quality tool steel.

- 1—Cabinet 1/4 x 3 1/4" 1—Mechanic 1/4 x 6"
- 1—Cabinet 1/4 x 5" 1—Heavy Duty 1/4 x 8"
- 1—Stubby 1/4 x 1 1/2" 1—Recess (#2) 1/4 x 4"

\$1.49 complete set postpaid

3 pc. PLIER SET

Fineest drop forged imported steel. Ground and polished heads, polished finish, and knurled handles for easier grip. Individually pocketed in heat sealed plastic kit.

- 1—Lienman Slip Joint, 9"
- 1—Long Nose, 5 1/2"
- 1—Diagonal, 5 1/2"

\$2.98 complete set postpaid



6 pc. AUGER BIT SET

Made of finest tool steel specially tempered and hardened to give years of quick, clean, easy drilling. Shanks will fit all electric drills. Packed in sturdy, heat-treated, compartmented plastic tool roll. Sizes: 3/8", 1/2", 5/8", 3/4", 7/8", and 1".

\$2.29 complete set postpaid



SURPLUS BARGAINS

DRILL STAND

Rust proof, cadmium plated, will hold 21 Jobber or Letter Drills. Stands upright on shelf or bench. Drill sites plainly marked on each opening. Sized by 64ths from 1/8" to 1/2".

\$1.49 postpaid



STEEL TAPE MEASURE WITH SPRING RETURN

Six feet long, 1/4" wide concave spring steel tape, highly polished with etched figures. Catch hook at end. Nickel plated steel case. Graduated to 1/16" with easy, accurate readings. Positive spring return.

\$1.39 postpaid



WHITE WOOD FOLDING RULES

Made of well seasoned lumber with metal tipped ends and spring joints. Markings are sharp and clear. Graduated in 16ths. 6 foot lengths.

\$1.49 postpaid



6 pc. METAL CUTTING FILE SET

Made from the best quality tool steel, designed for the requirements of mechanics, instrument watch and jewelry craftsmen. Compartmented plastic kit contains the following 6 1/2" long needle files with round shanks and high test cutting qualities: round, half-round, flat, oval, half, square.

\$1.98 complete set postpaid

MONEY BACK IF YOU DON'T AGREE THESE ARE THE BEST TOOL VALUES EVER!

SEND CHECK, CASH, OR MONEY ORDER AND WE PAY THE POSTAGE . . . IF C.O.D. POST AGE IS EXTRA!

USE THE ATTACHED COUPON FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY!

SCOTT-MITCHELL HOUSE, 611 BROADWAY, DEPT. MK-3, NEW YORK 12, N.Y.

Please send me the following items as indicated:

- ☐ 48 DRILLS @ \$2.00 per set
- ☐ 3 pc. ADJUSTABLE WRENCH SET @ \$2.98 per set
- ☐ DRILL STAND @ 49¢ ea.
- ☐ 6 pc. MAGNETIZED SCREW DRIVER SET @ \$1.49 per set
- ☐ FOLDING RULE @ 49¢ ea.
- ☐ 4 pc. CHISEL SET IN PLASTIC CASE @ \$2.98 per set
- ☐ STEEL TAPE MEASURE @ 39¢ ea.
- ☐ 3 pc. PLIER SET IN PLASTIC CASE @ \$2.98 per set
- ☐ 6 pc. AUGER BIT SET IN PLASTIC CASE @ \$2.29 per set
- ☐ 6 pc. METAL CUTTING FILE SET @ 98¢ per set

Enclosed find \$_____ ☐ CASH ☐ CHECK ☐ MONEY ORDER

Send C.O.D. PLUS POSTAGE CHARGES

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZONE _____ STATE _____

SCOTT-MITCHELL HOUSE, 611 BROADWAY, DEPT. MK-3, NEW YORK 12, N.Y.

torial offices to 626 Court Street, Huntington, Indiana.

Artwork, including the cover, is average to poor.

The letter column sounds as if you're getting a few readers left over from *Fate*. Harold Miller in the last issue, and now S. F. Cary. For Mr. Cary's information, if there were no people like DeCamp and del Rey to debunk false theories, there would never be any progress. It's very nice and "spiritual" to applaud every theory that comes along; but the sad fact is that there are, or have been, literally thousands of theories on every subject, only one of which will work. Now, if you refuse to "speak cynically of the beliefs of other people", just how do you expect to discover which of them is the right one? I expect the trouble is that de Camp has stepped a little heavily on one of Mr. Cary's beliefs, and he is rising—a trifle unsteadily—in his wrath to defend it.

Best letter was by Menicucci. I even agree with what he said, for a change. Second place to James Partridge, although I disagree with him on almost everything he said. Third place to S. F. Cary—it's idiotic missives like these that make a letter column worthwhile. Since most of your correspondants seemed annoyed about your publishing Miller's letter in the last issue, I want to give you a belated pat on the back for it. I got a bigger kick out of it than I did out of the stories—I suppose I have an odd sense of humor.

Good luck to SFQ; may you never fold.
—ROBERT COULSON, 626 Court St.,
Huntington, Ind.

What can I say after I say I'm sorry that the stories in the May issue disappointed you? Well, only that I hope it won't happen again—and that in pleasing you I don't disappoint the readers who liked the stories in our May book.

SATURATED?

Dear Editor:

Your editorial in current issue "Limitations of Science Fiction" certainly pointed up the situation. For a long time I have been reading the stuff merely in affectionate tolerance. It has ceased to thrill me, and some times it is downright boring.

It is not because I have reached a saturation point, because I don't believe that could be done. I started reading S. F. with the "Baldy" stories, and became an avid fan. I went back, bought up all the old copies I could find, never missed a month or an issue of any of the major pubs, and was really having a grand time. Then about a year and a half ago something happened. The gadget stories became so gadgety that I could hardly follow them. All invasions of earth had already been told; all the B.E.M.s on other planets have been met; nothing, nothing new—and as you say, poor writing along with it, no characterization, plots do not amount to a pin, and all we have left is

(turn to page 86)

Don't Fail to Read

COULD YOU SAVE A LIFE?

in the November issue of,

POPULAR MEDICINE

Plus Many Other Articles, Including

WE ARE WINNING THE FIGHT AGAINST ARTHRITIS

by O. K. Cosla, M.D.

The end is in sight for this crippling affliction that has killed and tortured millions of human beings.

HOW HORMONES GOVERN BEHAVIOR

by H. Goldstein, M.D.

THINK YOUNG! STAY YOUNG!

by John Charr, Ph.D.

If your newsdealer is sold out, send 35¢ for a copy of the November issue, or \$2.00 for a full year's subscription, to POPULAR MEDICINE, Dept. P., 66 Leonard Street, New York 13, New York.



PLAY GUITAR IN 7 DAYS OR GET MONEY BACK

**SURPRISE FRIENDS, RELATIVES, HAVE
POPULARITY AND FUN GALORE!**

**SEND
NO
MONEY**

In this introductory offer you get TOP RADIO GUITARIST ED SALE'S famous 66 page secret system (worth \$2.75) which positively teaches you to play a beautiful song the first day - and any song by ear or note in 7 days!

Ed Sale has shown thousands of people throughout the country how to play the Guitar like professionals. He now makes it possible for you to learn at home—quickly and easily—even though you have absolutely no previous music knowledge whatever!

This famous system contains 52 photos, 87 finger placing charts, etc. Shows how to tune, keep time,

build chords, bass runs, dance chords, swing, etc., plus 110 popular and western songs, words and music; a \$1.00 Chord Finder of all the chords used in popular music; a \$2.00 Guitarist Book of Knowledge - TOTAL VALUE - \$5.75
\$2.98

ALL THREE for only
SEND NO MONEY: Just name and address, pay postman \$2.98 plus C.O.D. postage. (Or send \$3.00 with order and I pay postage - same guarantee).
Rush Free Trial Coupon below!

INTRODUCTORY OFFER

"ED SALE" WILL SHOW YOU HOW TO PLAY THIS METAL

HARMONICA

IN 15 MINUTES — OR MONEY BACK

IF YOU
CAN WHISTLE
OR
TUNE A TUNE
ONLY
1.98



With True Tone Metal Reeds
SENT ON SEVEN DAY APPROVAL

In this INTRODUCTORY OFFER you get this nationally advertised metal harmonica, plus Ed Sale's new discovery for quickly showing you how to play, plus the words and music to 200 songs! All for only \$1.98!

TRY 7 DAYS AT OUR RISK

Learn to play the first day or if costs you nothing! Harmonica is Key of C professional type with individually tuned metal reeds. If you're not playing songs at once, you get your money back!

SEND NO MONEY
MAIL COUPON TODAY

Just send your name and address, and when your HARMONICA and BOOK OF INSTRUCTION and the 200 SONGS arrive, pay postman \$1.98 plus C.O.D. postage. Keep for 7 days. If you are not 100% satisfied, simply return and your money will be refunded at once. Take advantage of this big introductory offer today.

ED SALE • STUDIO 3013-A • BRADLEY BEACH, N. J.

- ☐ Send ED SALE'S 66-PAGE SECRET SYSTEM—CHORD FINDER OF ALL CHORDS USED IN POP MUSIC—GUITARIST'S BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE. I will pay postman \$2.98, plus C.O.D. postage.
- ☐ Send my GENUINE Key of C PROFESSIONAL METAL HARMONICA and COMPLETE BOOK OF INSTRUCTIONS with the music and words of 200 songs. I will pay postman \$1.98 plus C.O.D. postage.

I must be thrilled or I may return purchase for my money back.

- ☐ CHECK HERE if you are sending money with order to save C.O.D. and postage.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY AND ZONE STATE

(Sorry, no C.O.D. to APO, FPO or outside U.S.A.
Canada and Foreign remit with order.)

**Rush
FREE
TRIAL
COUPON
NOW**



STOP MAKING MISTAKES IN ENGLISH

With the new CAREER INSTITUTE METHOD you can stop making mistakes in English, build up your vocabulary, speed up your reading, improve your spelling, acquire real writing skill, learn the "secrets" of fluent conversation. Hundreds of men and women have become effective speakers, writers, and conversationalists—without going back to school—by using the CAREER INSTITUTE METHOD. Course Book. Take only 15 minutes a day at home. 22-page booklet mailed FREE upon request. Send card or letter NOW!

Career Institute, Dept. 4311, 35 E. Jackson, Chicago 4, Illinois

MEN

Glandular
Inflammation?
Night Rising?
Lost Vitality?

If you suffer any of these symptoms, write for FREE BOOKLET that tells of our mild, NON-SURGICAL treatment. Write today to Dept. M-2

The Kansas City Clinic

920 Oak St. Kansas City 6, Mo.



Lovely used DRESSES

The biggest bargains we have ever offered. Prints, solids, rayons, cottons, etc. Assorted styles and colors. Sizes 10 to 18. 10 for \$4.95. Larger sizes 9 for \$4.95. Send \$1 deposit, balance C.O.D. plus postage. Your \$4.95 refunded if dissatisfied, or merchandise exchanged, if desired. Many other clothing bargains for entire family.

POSTCARD BRINGS FREE CATALOG
ALLIED MAIL ORDER CO., INC.
Dept. 107-T, 102 CHRISTOPHER AVE.,
BROOKLYN 12, N. Y.

SONGWRITERS
YOUR SONGS
PUBLISHED
\$1200.00 ADVANCE ROYALTY
CASH PAYOUT

COMPLETE SONG WRITING SERVICE

We write the music for your words without charge on \$9.50 basis. We send you records and copies of your completed song.

GUARANTEED PUBLICATION

We guarantee the publication of at least two songs each month by a legitimate B.M.I. music publisher. The writers receive advance royalty and a standard royalty contract. The publisher pays all publication expenses.

WHAT ARE YOUR CHANCES?

If you have ability your chances are good. Now song-writers become famous every year. Maybe this is YOUR year. Publishers are constantly on the lookout for good songs. Turn your material over to a firm whose business is SONGWRITING.

WRITE TODAY

SEND YOUR POEM or lyric today for free examination and complete information on our exceptional offer.

Dept. P, 1667 Vista Del Mar, Hollywood 28, Calif.

HOLLYWOOD TUNESMITHS

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

a poor skeleton, fast going to the interstellar bowwows.

Besides, the writers are always so pessimistic. Nothing good can happen. I am sure I would enjoy reading science fiction again if I could find stories dealing with brighter themes, or where the characters are not slugging it out with death-dealing ray guns. I would prefer a more subtle treatment—how characters would react under situations and under cosmic circumstances of which there are no frames of reference.

I have just finished reading the "Golden Bough" by Frazer, (I had to turn to it in self-defense) and it seemed to me to be filled with wonderful material for writers. It is a science, too, Anthropology.

I also have just finished "Space, Gravity and the Flying Saucers" by Leonard G. Gramp, in which he rehashes Adamaki's contact, and says something that I thought was wonderful but felt was true. He says probably we will find the extraterrestrials far, far advanced from us; and I got the impression it would be in ethics and benevolent concepts that we can hardly grasp. Would not some stories written along these lines be inspiring? We all know about the horrors of the H Bomb, C Bomb, and what have you; but stories about them only dig up something that we have all hidden neatly away.

—GRACE M. KAY, 2160 Stewart Ave.,
Atlanta, Georgia

Some of the older stories—written in the days when imaginatively-inclined writers and editors were still under the Victorian spell of never-ending progress, when science was still something not only awe-inspiring and wonderful, but also an open sesame to golden tomorrows—seem rather silly today. Yet, many of them have a charm and wonderful quality about them, for all that. We can't recapture the moods of yesteryear any more than we can return to a happier past—which really wasn't as splendid as it seems in retrospect. But I'm always on the lookout for stories which have something of that earlier quality of entertainment, without the flaws of the old tales, and without the tired despair of much of the present-day material which has little more than one boringly bloody fracas after another.

LEFT BEHIND

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

Let me say that I am sorry that I am writing you on yellow second sheets, but it's Sunday night, and I'm fresh out of white. I realize that reading this will be harder than otherwise, but I do have a fairly new ribbon. So, just stick with me.

Being a member of the generation of "those crazy mixed-up kids," I find that to be considered even crazier than usual is to read science fiction. Not that it matters to me; science-fiction means more to me than

[Turn To Page 88]

DO PROFESSIONAL METAL REPLATING AT HOME **SAVE MONEY MAKE MONEY** NEW METAL BRILLIANCE

Electroplate SILVER · COPPER · GOLD · CHROME
with Miracle Plating Solutions including

HARDEST METAL KNOWN

RHODIUM

GUARANTEED
Electroplating
Kits **EVEN A CHILD
CAN USE IT**

NEW INVENTION

REPLATE Worn, Tarnished even "Silvered" Metals
RIGHT NOW—Using the same easy plating process that
earns Professional Metal Platers up to \$20 per hour. You can permanently replate hundreds
of items with a new invention called APPLI-COTER. All you do is dip APPLI-COTER into solution
and start brushing on. Yes, it's as easy as that and the plating you apply becomes an
INDISTINGUISHABLE part of the Metal itself! RENEW in a jiffy—CAR CHROME, SILVER, NICKEL,
STEEL, GOLD, BRASS with Miracles Solutions.
You can even plate Silver, Gold, Copper and
Platinum jewelry with RHODIUM—this solu-
tion transforms each item to a beautiful

and permanent Silver-finish that is harder than
chrome and cannot tarnish. MET-L-
COTE Solution for CHROME is so
effective, it is being used on
Guided Missiles. MET-L-COTE is
also constantly used in food-
ing hospitals and in doctors'
and dentists' offices to
replate surgical instru-
ments — also used in res-
taurants to restore cutlery.
**ORDER THE KITS
YOU NEED NOW!**

**QUICKLY-BUILDS-UP A THICK,
NEW PLATING
with Each Application**

MET-L-COTE — Replates, Restores
CHROME, NICKEL, BRASS, COPPER,
STEEL, IRON and BRONZE. PERFECT
FOR CAR CHROME: Builds up a
lasting layer of coating that tra-
sformously lengthens the life of
original trim

SILV-S-COTE — Replates SILVER Pieces with
genuine Sterling Silver Solution

GOLD-COTE — Replates solid gold items and jewelry
with 24 Karat GOLD PLATE Solution. Restores
original luster to worn
or tarnished jewelry

RHODIUM — Newest
jewelry metal, sold
to be hardest metal
known. Plates Sil-
ver, Gold, Copper
and Platinum Jew-
elry to a beautiful
Silver-Finish.

**ORDER THE KITS
YOU NEED NOW!**



**AUTO CHROME —
FOR SPARKLING NEW
PERMANENT FINISH,
use MET-L-COTE**



MET-L-COTE REPLATES



MET-L-COTE RESTORES



**MET-L-COTE BRIGHTENS
and PROTECTS**



**APPLI-COTER
actually
ELECTROPLATES!**



**MAKE BIG EXTRA MONEY
AT HOME — WE GIVE YOU
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO START!**

Add to your income during spare-time hours or begin a successful
business of your own right at home! You can charge up to \$10 an
hour to start, and later double your fee with this valuable work.
Almost everyone has metal treasures, appliances, metal trim, cutlery
and car chrome they want RENEWED. You can do it simply, easily
and QUICKLY!

PRICE LIST OF ALL KITS (Each kit contains Appli-coter)

		COMBINATION KITS
☐ MET-L-COTE	\$2.95	
☐ SILV-S-COTE	3.95	☐ SILV-S-COTE & GOLD-COTE \$7.95
☐ GOLD-COTE	3.95	☐ MET-L-COTE & SILV-S-COTE 6.95
☐ RHODIUM-COTE	7.95	☐ COMPLETE KIT TO PLATE
☐ GOLF-ELECTRO-COTE	3.95	EVERY METAL \$15.95

EMPIRE MERCHANDISING CO., Dept. JD-1R
28 E. First St., Mt. Vernon, New York

Please rush the Complete Plating Kit I have checked
—including Solutions, Electroplating APPLI-COTER and
full simple instructions. I enclose full price—send
postpaid, or send C.O.D. plus postage.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____

**"CASH REFUND IF NOT
COMPLETELY SATISFIED"**

I Learned SHORTHAND IN 6 WEEKS

with **Speedwriting**

No Symbols — No Machines
Uses A B C's

by Henry Stepp,
Beauty, Kentucky



"I enrolled for the SPEEDWRITING shorthand course and mastered it within a few weeks at less than an hour a day. Shortly after starting, I was writing shorthand at 120 words a minute. Anyone who knows the alphabet can master SPEEDWRITING shorthand easily."

**Sample Lesson Enables YOU to
Test SPEEDWRITING Shorthand at home—
ABSOLUTELY FREE!**

Because SPEEDWRITING shorthand uses the ABC's you have known since your childhood—it is by far the simplest and quickest shorthand to learn. That is why we invite you to mail the coupon NOW for both our FREE booklet and a FREE sample lesson. See for yourself how, within a few moments after you read this sample lesson, you can actually write SPEEDWRITING shorthand. You will be amazed—and delighted. Here is a shorthand that can actually be learned in only 6 weeks at home or through classroom instruction. 120 words per minute—60% FASTER than Civil Service requirements. SPEEDWRITING shorthand is as accurate and speedy as it is simple and easy to learn. Most important of all, you can use it immediately.

FREE! "A Shortcut to a Better Job and More Pay"

Today there are over 300,000 ambitious men and women who have found SPEEDWRITING shorthand a shortcut to a better job and more pay in business, industry or Civil Service positions. You learn at home in your leisure time or through classroom instruction. The cost is low, terms arranged to suit your convenience. Typing also available. If you are anxious to do something new to pave the way to a sound, substantial career—mail the coupon TODAY! SPEEDWRITING schools in over 400 cities in U. S., Canada, Cuba and Hawaii.

Speedwriting®

Dept. 7410-E, 55 West 42nd St., New York 36, N. Y.

School of SPEEDWRITING
Dept. 7410-E, 55 West 42nd St.
New York 36, N. Y.

33rd Year

Please send full details and FREE sample lesson
☐ Home study ☐ Classroom instruction

Name

Address

City Zone State

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

a few pig-headed people who are too narrow in their ways to read a little s-f and make up their own minds about it. So, (1) you have bit me partly right between the eyes. I started reading science fiction when I was twelve. My parents did not approve, but they also did not say that I couldn't read the stuff. Perhaps you are right, however, when you say that the young fan builds a very tight defensive pattern by feeling guilty about what he reads, and having to justify it to everybody and his brother. No wonder he becomes fanatic, writes letters, seeks egoboo, and—in general—raises hell all over the entire field. I was that way myself, once.

In my freshman year of high school (pardon my typing), I had a science teacher who has worked at Oak Ridge, and is supposed to have a brain equalled to some of the best experts in the field of atomic energy. Now being in the stage when I wanted everyone to know that I read s-f, and seeking a little understanding, I blew off a little in her class, and was tabbed as a fanatic about fairy tales which mean nothing by her. This soon led me to keep my mouth shut. My feelings were hurt, and I didn't give a damn what she thought; science fiction had a lot of science in it, and should be compared to the rest of general literature as such.

Now that has been some time ago. During this time I have grown out of my fanatic beliefs, and have taken a little time to try and understand why I like s-f. The only answer is, of course, that it appeals to my sense of wonder and imagination. But in my mythical search for true s-f, I soon found out that (2) s-f is not an artificial division of the field of literature. It is just as natural as sex, and just as positive as day and night. The nights of the full moon is Bradbury, and a few others.

During the past few years there has been a rising outcry against s-f within s-f itself. This is not only odd, it just doesn't make good sense. Fandom said that s-f must either grow up, or get out—taking (I'm sure many fans noticed this when the letter columns started to die) fandom with it. Now science fiction took fandom at its word, for once, but they did it in the wrong direction. S-f, like any division of writing, grows with its writers. But the new crew went off on a tangent. Oh yes, their writing was slick and polished. Their descriptions were superb, and their characters were believable. But their plots became, and are becoming, more sickening every day. They took one look at the *New Yorker*, and John Collier, and decided that the new s-f must be something like this. Oh yes, the writing was nice... Slight but still beautifully done... Where, I cry, is the old sense of wonder? Where is a new concept that takes your breath, and leave you startled and dazed for hours, just thinking about it? "The Demolished Man"? Well, the writing was wonderful. Bester outdid himself on it. The

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

ending was shock piled upon shock. But where is one piece of plot that you will think over? There is none. Not one.

By telling itself that science fiction must combine with the rest of literature, fandom and s-f has done nothing but pour ink into an already inky mess. To stay science fiction, science fiction must ingrow. I know this sounds backwards, but it must grow according to its own rules. It must not try to evaluate itself and its ideas and writings with the rest of literature. A good s-f story can be a combination of other types, but a mixture seldom is a success. Bradbury does not write science fiction or fantasy. He has written some, but he is far more concerned with human emotions, and little else. By quitting science, except for a background prop, s-f becomes nothing. Now, I don't mean that s-f should revert back to the old Gernsback school; but I do mean that a story labeled s-f should have some science in it. And I mean new ideas about science. Fantasy is fantasy and I shall not take it up here.

So, even though s-f is a natural division, it should not be compared with the rest of literature. By the very fact that it is s-f, it can't be compared. Except, of course, within s-f itself.

(3) By reading science fiction the average person will have a little more insight about other people because, since he has a mind that doesn't just take things as they are, science fiction will make him wonder. He'll take another look at that old "Things are not what they seem." Usually the fan has hopes of being a writer. To do so he will write. And when anyone pours out words upon a piece of paper, he starts watching how other people act, how they talk, and how they think. It will make him observe more closely, which always leads to a better understanding of the other fellow.

As for s-f being the literature of the future—I think not, too. If it tries to do this it will no longer be s-f. It will be just stories about people in strange places, and what happens to them while they are there.

Let's face it. Science fiction is no longer the real fiction of the future. Science is making so many bounds in different directions, that s-f is being left behind. This new crop of *New Yorker* type s-f is nothing more than alight trite rewrites about nothing. The science fiction author must get on the ball, and look out over and beyond the horizon for new ideas.

I don't know, maybe they can, and maybe they can't. But I do know this much. The field is suffering a tremendous setback. It needs something new to perk it up. And by comparing ourselves to general literature, fandom can never help s-f. Science fiction must never become a thing like Bradbury. I like Bradbury. But I love s-f far more. I want it to stay my favorite reading matter.

Sensational Device TESTS EYES SAVE up to \$15.00 ON GLASSES



Big news to the Millions of Spectacle Wearers and prospects. Means Freedom from outrageous prices. Sold on Money-back Guarantee.



The "RIM KING" America's Favorite Eyeglasses. Positively the last word in style, looks, durability. Has strength and beauty of Tortoise Shell color and the smartness and visibility of rimless mounting.

MAKE BIG MONEY QUICK with Free SAMPLE KIT

Show it to friends and others. Let them use it Free and watch their amazement over this self testing system. Here is a great new opportunity in a tremendous new field of unlimited possibilities. Spare no full time. No experience needed. Write for FREE complete sample kit.

C. G. OPTICAL CO., Dept. AT-222
20 E. Delaware Place Chicago 11, Ill.



BEFORE



AFTER

ARE YOU BALD? or LOSING HAIR

Today you have new hope for hair regrowth for it has been proved that, even though you are bald, the hair room may still be alive so produce new hairs. Thousands have accomplished this with the amazing Brandenfeldt System. See "before" and "after" pictures at left! Write now for full FREE information!

Carl Brandenfeldt
Box 704 St. Helens, Oregon

EARN TO \$1500 MONTHLY — MEN NEEDED

Many Types of Jobs. Laborers, Clerical, Mechanics, Truck Drivers, Engineers, Supervisors, etc. Chance to travel. S. America, Europe, Africa, USA, etc. Many benefits. Fare paid by employers. No Employment Fees. Application Forms. For information and quick reply, Write Dept. 710, National Employment Information, 1020 Broad, Newark, N.J.

EXPERT DICE CARDS, INKS, etc. STRONG! RELIABLE! FREE CATALOGUE Send for it today!

O. C. Novelty Company, Dept. E
1311 W. Main Oklahoma City 4, Okla.

Give the fillos to Meniscuel, Link, and Cary.

—JAMES LEWIS, Route #4
Trenton, Tenn.

P. S. Although I haven't seen the latest issue of *Future* yet, I would like to enter a plea here for it to have all of its old features. And for you to start a few in *Science Fiction Stories*. Fandom needs science fiction. And I think that science fiction needs fandom.

Your second sheets were quite neat and your typewriting clean enough, so no apologies were needed. ...Some of the experiments with science fiction haven't been either successful or much fun to read; but on the whole, I think the enjoyable stories of today hold up better than the enjoyable stories of twenty years back. And has anyone tried to find out how the proportions of "good" and "poor" stories of yesterday, by yesterday's standards, compare with the proportions of those days, when there were far less issues of magazines and thus far fewer stories being presented?

WHAT'S WRONG HERE?

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

What's wrong with *Science Fiction Quarterly*?

There must be some reason why SFQ has fiction of such a consistently low quality. The usual reasons for a magazine being

weak don't seem to apply. The editor shows imagination and a "literary eye" in his selections for the other two magazines he edits; therefore, we can't say that the editor is unable to exercise good judgement in his purchases. Still you have chosen some really poor stories for SFQ; I think your last two lead novels have been especially bad.

So then, it isn't a lousy editor that's hurting SFQ. Not at all; you're one of the best, except in your efforts for this magazine. The usual next step is to say that the magazine has too low a budget. That can't be true. If you can afford to trim your edges and use the better quality of pulp, your rates can't be too low. *Planet*, even with its obvious lack of funds, has topped you in its last two issues. Nope, tain't money.

So what's left? Hard-hearted publisher? Naw, same publisher as *Future* and *Science Fiction Stories*.

I think I've found the answer. You're fooling yourself as to what the readers want; that's the trouble. Somehow you've found out that SFQ is a dirty old pulp, and you think you have to live up to the definition of the oldtime pulps. The stories are full of violence-for-violence's-sake, and sex-for-sex's-sake, and never mind the story. You think to produce a magazine in the pulp format you have to appeal to the slobbe mentality. (A slobbe is the guy who

[Turn To Page 92]

\$35,000

BONUS OFFERED BY THE U. S. GOVERNMENT
FOR *URANIUM FOUND ANYWHERE!



FREE! BOOKLET

"HOW TO MAKE MONEY PROSPECTING FOR URANIUM"

IT'S EASY! NOW
YOU
CAN FIND
URANIUM
ON YOUR FARM!
IN YOUR OWN
BACKYARD!



BEFORE SELLING
YOUR LAND
Explore for Uranium
It may be worth
millions!

GET YOURS TODAY!

U. S. GIEGER CO.

195 SACKETT ST. DEPT. DA-31 BROOKLYN 31, N.Y.

Please send me FREE illustrated booklet "How to Make Money Prospecting for Uranium" and other Free Literature. (Please enclose 10c to cover cost of handling & postage).

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE

HAVE THESE AND OTHER QUESTIONS ANSWERED...

① Why Should I look for Uranium?

② Does Prospecting for Uranium Require Technical Skill?

③ Where Can Uranium Be Found?

④ What Equipment is Required to Find Uranium?

⑤ What Chances Do I Have of Finding Uranium?

⑥ How Do I Stake a Claim to the Uranium On Public Lands?

Atomic Energy Commission offer due to national defense need of Uranium

NEW BODIES FOR OLD!

**I've Made New Men Out of
Thousands of Other Fellows...**

**"Here's what I did for
THOMAS MANFRE...and
what I can do for you!"**

—Charles Atlas

GIVE me a skinny, peepless, second-rate body—and I'll cram it so full of handsome, bulging new muscle that your friends will grow bug-eyed!... I'll wake up that sleeping energy of yours and make it hum like a high-powered motor! Man, you'll feel and look different! You'll begin to LIVE!

**Let Me Make YOU a NEW MAN—
IN JUST 15 MINUTES A DAY**

YOU wouldn't believe it, but I myself used to be a 87-lb. weakling. Fellows called me "Skinny." Girls snickered and made fun of me behind my back. I was a flop.

THEN I discovered my marvelous new muscle-building system — "Dynamic Tension." And it turned me into such a complete specimen of MANHOOD that today I hold the title "THE WORLD'S MOST PERFECTLY DEVELOPED MAN."

What is "Dynamic Tension"? How Does It Work? When you look in the mirror and see a healthy, husky,

strapping fellow smiling back at you — then you'll realize how fast "Dynamic Tension" GETS RESULTS!

"Dynamic Tension" is the easy, NATURAL method you can practice in the privacy of your own room—JUST 15 MINUTES A DAY—while your scrawny chest and shoulder muscles begin to swell, ripple... those spindly arms and legs of yours bulge... and your whole body starts to feel "alive," full of zip and go!

**One Postage Stamp May Change
Your Whole Life!**

Sure, I gave Thomas Manfre (shown above) a NEW BODY. But he's just one of thousands. I'm steadily building broad-shouldered, dynamic MEN—day by day—the country over.

8 1/3 million fellows, young and old, have already sent a postage stamp to ask for my FREE book. They wanted to read and see for themselves how I build up screwy bodies, and how I pare down fat, flabby ones — how I turn them into dynamos of MANPOWER.



Be the envy of friends! Win this handsome "Atlas" trophy over 1 1/2 ft. high!

**CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 4Y,
115 East 23rd St., New York 10, N.Y.**

Send me—absolutely FREE—a copy of your famous book, "Everlasting Health and Strength"—32 pages, crammed with actual photographs, answers to vital health questions, and valuable advice to every man who wants a better build. I understand this book is mine to keep, and sending for it does not obligate me in any way.

Name Age
(Please print or write plainly)

Address

City State

FREE My 32-Page Illustrated Book
Is Yours. Not for \$1.00
or 10c... But FREE.

Send NOW for my famous book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." 32 pages, crammed with photographs and valuable advice. Shows what "Dynamic Tension" can do, answers many vital questions. Page by page it shows what I can for YOU.

This book is a real prize for any fellow who wants a better build. Yet I'll send you a copy absolutely FREE. Just glancing through it may mean the turning point in your whole life. Rush the coupon to me personally: **CHARLES ATLAS**, Dept. 4Y, 115 East 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y.



buys the paperback with the sexiest cover.) You think that because SFQ gets many letters asking for space opera, you have to have stories like that "No Time For Change" piece (which is so full of battles that you don't especially care who wins any more, and try to speed up your reading rate about 500 words a minute so you can get the thing finished faster). The folks who write in aren't asking for that stuff at all. By space opera, they mean the Leigh Brackett and Edmond Hamilton type of tale, which is exciting and fast-moving but still well-plotted and skillfully-written.

As for the individual stories themselves, I'd rather not attempt to rate them. I'll just say that in the February ish only "The Fission of Mrs. Custer" was readable, "No Time For Change" being the worst novel in the history of s-f. In May issue, "The Red and the Green" was fair, the others below amateur quality. And what have you done to Sam Merwin, Jr.? His humor has always been delightful; now it's of the baggy-pants variety...

Covers: Feb.—very, very poor. The way everything is slightly blurred-looking I got the opinion that the thing was finger-painted. May—nice. And the one Emsh turned out for May *Science Fiction Stories*—even nicer.

Interiors: why don't you give up and go straight fiction and departments? ...Wait a minute! ...What am I saying? ...Maybe you better go straight departments. ...Just think, you'd be the only pro-fan-

zine in the racket!

The departments, as usual, wonderful. Damon Knight is certainly our top reviewer. "Inside S-F": lots of fun. The letters aren't at all uninteresting. Link gets the illo, say I...and the editorial: good and strictly non-commercial. I'm glad to see you don't try to peddle your other magazines, as most editors do.

Now here's an idea for you. A lot of fans have kicked about the dropping of letters from *Future*. Why not satisfy them by letting them write to SFQ to comment on *Future* and *Science Fiction Stories*. Your letter column isn't at all overloaded, and most SFQ readers read *Future*, anyway.

Wonderful issue of *Future* by the way (No. 28). Every story way above average. It's very hard to choose between them, but I think it'd rate like this: 1) "Trial Without Combat" 2) "Iron Man" 3) "Decline" 4) "Mark of the Homoid" 5) "This Thing Called Love" 6) "Cornzan, the Mighty". The top 3 all so good, it's pretty near a tie.

And while I'm on this kick I'll rate March *Science Fiction Stories*: 1) "The Pattern" 2) "The Ear-Friend" 3) "Path of Darkness" 4) "Playback" 5) "Caution Advisable" 6) "Repeat Performance".

Still got one story to go in May SFS, so I can't rate that one. All good so far.

—VICTOR PAANANEN, 1148 E. 8th St.
Ashtabula, Ohio

You may have a point there, and I'll do a little soul-searching along with my reading

(USED)

20 DRESSES for \$3.50

BIG DRESS SALE

Assorted Dresses
Silk, Wool, Cotton and Rayon
All Sizes In Good Condition

- No less than 20 dresses sold at this Bargain Price.
- A deposit of \$1.00 is required. You pay postman balance plus COD and postage charges.
- Money refunded if merchandise is not satisfactory.

A trial order will convince you of our wonderful Bargains.

MAIL ORDER MART Dept. DA-11
199 Sackett St.
Brooklyn 31, New York

Name _____
Address _____
City _____

Enclosed find \$1.00 Deposit. I will pay postman COD balance PLUS postage.

ITEM	SIZE	PRICE

Mail This Handy Coupon Today!

IT SAYS HERE

for forthcoming issues. Meanwhile, I'd like to hear from more of you with ideas as to what's wrong with SFQ—matters that the editor can correct, that is.

LETTERS LIKED

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

Please return the voting coupon and "The Reckoning". Half the fun of reading a story is seeing how and if others agree with you.

The letters in the May issue of SFQ were terrific, and I just realized how good the letters in the previous issues were. And this after I wrote to another magazine, saying their letter column was best. Why, even John Courtois once wrote you a decent letter!

W. F. Link had a good idea, that of separating the letter section and the editorial. But now your editorial is in small type, and it's so long! Shorten it, or put it in bigger type. Same thing with the book reviews and "Inside Science Fiction". And I just hate splitting up a feature story into different sections of the book. Can't you plan them so they'll come out even? However, I know it's impossible to do a great amount in this respect.

My vote for the best letter is Jim Blish's, although he did go a little too far writing against Harold Miller. It was written so well, though, that I have to ask if Jim Blish is James Blish, the author.

What is wrong with a serial? I'm tired of science fiction novels 20,000 words or less. How about a real novel, 75,000 words or more, split up? (*Galaxy* is doing it now.)

The stories were slightly better than average. Best was "Gladstone Planet". Some think Winterbotham writes trash, but this was pretty good, almost first class. Second best is "The Eye in the Window", certainly not terrific. Third is, "The Guzzler". This is the old, dependable, solid type of story—not real good, but not bad. Fourth is "The Red and The Green", also average. Rather old, too.

I don't like the next two. In fifth place, "The Sedulous Apes", not good. In sixth and last place, "You Risk Your Life"—terrible.

—LAWRENCE SHEVLIN, 11760 Kilmourne, Detroit 13, Michigan

Yes, the two Blishes of whom you speak are one.... I avoid splitting off the ending of a story to the back of the book wherever possible, but sometimes makeup problems make it necessary. The alternative is (a) cut the story (b) write in several hundred words of my own into the ending so that it comes out right. I don't like to do the former; if a story needs cutting, I either have the author do it, or make eight cuts myself, before sending it off to the printer. As to the latter—perhaps a few readers couldn't tell the difference, but I'm sure the authors could, and I doubt if anyone would appreciate such an operation just for the

LEARN UPHOLSTERY

in your spare time

run your own business AT HOME



FREE BOOK

with sample lessons shows how YOU MAKE

SKIPPER CHAIR

CLUB CHAIR

OTTOMAN

with Slip Covers You'll Keep or Sell

BE YOUR OWN BOSS

Earn profit from the start! Set up your own profitable business, in your own home, enjoy steady income, independence for life—in the booming field of custom upholstery. Right off you start learning with books, complete frames, fabrics and materials, included. Yours with your UPS course. You learn skilled professional custom upholstery, reupholstery, furniture finishing, repairs, how to make beautiful slip covers, window curtains, cushions and draperies. **ASK FOR YOUR LEADIN' IN YOUR SPARE TIME...the UPS way.**

FREE illustrated book, with sample lessons. Get ready for a well-paid job, big profits from steady work, as your own boss, running your own business. Mail course NOW! Training in N. Y. School also available.

APPROVED FOR VETERAN TRAINING

UPHOLSTERY TRADES SCHOOL

Dept. DS-6310, 721 B'way, N.Y. 3, N.Y.

Please send me free book with Free Sample Lessons. No obligation—no antiseptic will call.

☐ School Training ☐ Home Study

Name

Address

City

State

☐ Check ☐ Cash ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

★ SONG POEMS WANTED

★ Send Poems, Immediate Consideration.
★ PHONEGRAPH RECORDS MADE
★ FIVE STAR MUSIC MASTERS, 440 BEACON BLDG.,
★ BOSTON, MASS.

Unsurpassed Comfort With Improved RUPTURE ★ RELIEVER



DOUBLE only \$4.95



Right or Left \$3.95

NO FITTING REQUIRED

ADJUSTABLE FOR YOUR COMFORT

FOR MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN

AT LAST A NEW FORM-FITTING WAISTABLE BRACER WITH ADJUSTABLE LEG STRAPS THAT'S GUARANTEED TO BE THE MOST COMFORTABLE YOU EVER WORE! NO SNAPS, NO LACES, NO STEEL. Amazing new kind of flat groin pad for support with complete comfort. BEST TOO AFTER OPERATION SUPPORT. Order by MAIL.
☐ RIGHT SIDE \$2.95 ☐ LEFT SIDE \$3.95
☐ DOUBLE \$4.95. Measurement around LOWEST PART OF ABDOMEN IN INCHES 18; inches. SENT ON APPROVAL. AVOID SERIOUS DELAY • SOLD ON MONEY BACK GUARANTEE.

WRIGHT BRACER CO.

Dept. 154., 318 Market St., Newark, New Jersey

Bean's

Free Fall Catalog

Just Off the Press



Fully Illustrated, 104 pages, showing Hunting Footwear, Clothing, and one hundred and twenty other leather and canvas specialties of our own manufacture for campers and hunters.

L. L. Bean, Inc., 308 Main St.
Freeport, Maine
Mfrs. Hunting and Camping Specialties

SONGS - \$\$\$\$\$\$

Share \$29 million yearly. Songs Composed, PUBLISHED, promoted. Appraisal, Info FREE. Send to NORDYKE PUBLISHING CO.
6000 SUNSET BLVD., Hollywood 28 DA, Cal.

God WANTS YOU

To Be Really Happy! Are you feeling difficult Problems? Poor Health? Money or Job Troubles? Love or Family Troubles? Are you Worried about someone dear to you? Is someone dear to you Drinking too Much? Do you ever get Lonely—Unhappy—Discouraged. Would you like to have more Happiness, Success and "Good Fortune" in Life?

If you have any of these Problems, or others like them, dear friend, then here is wonderful NEWS—News of a remarkable NEW WAY of PRAYER that is helping thousands to glorious NEW happiness and joy! Whether you believe in PRAYER or not, this remarkable NEW WAY may bring a whole NEW world of happiness and joy to you—and vary, vary quickly, too!

So don't wait, dear friend. You will surely bless this day—to please don't delay! Just clip this Message now and mail with your name, address, and 3c stamp to LIFE-STUDY FELLOWSHIP, Box 5010, Noroton, Conn. We will rush this wonderful NEW Message of PRAYER and FAITH to you by AIR MAIL absolutely FREE!

ADD MULTIPLY CALCULATE at a glance!

Essential For—
SCHOOL
BUSINESS
HOME-SHOP
FACTORY
OFFICE

RAPID-FIRE CALCULATOR for vast number combinations—and fractions, too.
SAVES HOURS of tedious figuring. GUARANTEED ACCURATE. QUICK ANSWERS SET YOU AHEAD FASTER!

Stop waiting precious time figuring. Now own a School-Boy can get 100% accurate answers at a Glance! A PERMANENT CALCULATOR—ONLY 50c
ORDER NOW on MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE!
WEHMAN BKOS., Dept. DA 7123 Way, N.Y. 3, N. Y.

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

sake of ending on a particular page. . . Galaxy appears every month, while there's a three-months' lag between issues of Science Fiction Quarterly, a bit long to wait for another installment of a serial, don't you think?



WE'RE HURTING, TOO!

Dear Bob,

Before me sets the May issue of SFQ, and I am displeased with it. There was but one really good story in the whole issue, and that was Joe L. Hensley's "The Red and the Green". The plot wasn't startling, but it was quietly and well written. (Odd sounding sentence, that.) I'd like to see more of his work. The Merwin story left me completely unimpressed. It was well written, granted; Merwin nearly always writes well. The plot, however, was strictly for the squares. Hack. He can do better than that.

By the way, I seem to remember an editorial in which you greatly deplored the labeling of novelets as novels, and shorts as novelets. Since when, Mr. Lowndes, is a 36 page story a novel? For shame.

I actively disliked "The Sedulous Apes" and "You Risk Your Life". My God, Bob, you can't be that hard up! The former would have been turned down by a fanzine, and the latter wasn't much better. The others I remain fairly indifferent to. On the whole, discouraging in the extreme.

I thought the cover was one of Luros mistakes at first, or a very bad Schomberg. If not for the signature, I would have never thought it was Emen. As you may have gathered, I didn't like it, either. The interior art was just as good as usual. Freas was very good, and the rest were fair. Who did the illo for "You Risk Your Life"?

Your editorial was good, (very) and ditto for the other departments. Wish you'd put "20 Years Ago" back in "Inside Science Fiction", tho. Sorry to have griped so much. It hurt me as much as it did you, for SFQ is one of my favorites. If this sees print, I'd like to correspond with anyone who'd write.

Till August...

—BARRY GARDNER, Box 201, Deport, Texas

Of course, the editor can always point to other letters which say how good a particular issue was, but that won't make either of us feel any better, will it? If you didn't like the stories, there's no point in anyone's trying to tell you why you should have; anyway, so far as you're concerned, they shouldn't have, either. And no matter how many letters I get expressing satisfaction,

[Turn To Page 96]

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T WRITE?



Wins Essay Contest with N.I.A. Training

"The N.I.A. method prepared me for almost any type of writing I may want to do. I won a prize for my entry in the Christopher Essay Contest which has all but paid for my N.I.A. Course. The Colorado Republican published two of my stories and have asked for more. Many thanks for your encouragement." — Mrs. M. V. Hunter, 3310 W. 31st Avenue, Denver 11, Colorado.



Wins Writing Success at 56

"I enrolled in N.I.A. because I wanted to convince myself whether at 56 an old dog could learn new tricks. At my first try, I sent a manuscript to the New York Times and was amazed when it was accepted. Another story was also sold to the Times." — Michael I. Possorelli, 25 Spring St., Milburn, N. J.

Have you ever tried?

Have you ever attempted even the least bit of training, under competent guidance?

Or have you been sitting back, as it is so easy to do, waiting for the day to come when you will awaken, all of a sudden, to the discovery, "I am a writer"?

If the latter course is the one of your choosing, you probably *never* will write. Lawyers must be law clerks. Doctors must be internes. Engineers must be draftsmen. We all know that, in our time, the egg does come before the chicken.

It is seldom that anyone becomes a writer until he (or she) has been writing for some time. That is why so many authors and writers spring up out of the newspaper business. The day-to-day necessity of writing—of gathering material about which to write—develops their talent, their insight, their background and their confidence as nothing else could.

That is why the Newspaper Institute of America bases its writing instruction on journalism—continuous writing—the training that has produced so many successful authors.

Learn to Write by Writing

NEWSPAPER Institute training is based on the New York Copy Desk Method! It starts and keeps you writing in your own home, on your own time. Week by week you receive actual assignments, just as if you were right at work on a great metropolitan daily. Your writing is *individually* corrected and constructively criticized. Thoroughly experienced, practical, active writers are responsible for this instruction. Under such sympathetic guidance, you will find that (instead of vainly trying to copy someone else's writing tricks) you are rapidly developing your own distinctive, self-flavored style—undergoing an experience that has a thrill to it and which, at the same time, develops in you the power to make your feelings articulate.

Many people who *should* be writing become awestruck by fabulous stories about millionaire authors, and, therefore, give little thought to the \$25, \$50 and \$100 or more that can often be earned for material that takes little time to write—stories, articles on business, hobbies, sports, travel, news items, human interest stories, local, church and club activities, home-making, travel, etc.—things that can easily be turned out in leisure hours, and often on the impulse of the moment.

A Chance to Test Yourself — FREE!

Our unique **FREE** Writing Aptitude Test tells whether you possess the fundamental qualities necessary to successful writing—acute observation, dramatic instinct, creative imagination, etc. You'll enjoy taking this test. It's **FREE**. Just mail the coupon today and see what our editors say. Newspaper Institute of America, One Park Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. (Founded 1925.) (Licensed by State of N. Y.)

Free

**NEWSPAPER INSTITUTE OF AMERICA
ONE PARK AVE., NEW YORK 16, N.Y.**

Send me, without cost or obligation, your **FREE** Writing Aptitude Test and further information about writing for profit, as promised in Double Action Group.

Mr. }

Miss }

Mrs. }

Address

City

Zone

State

(All correspondence confidential. No salesman will call on you.)

☐ Check here if Veteran.

31-T-365

Copyright 1955 Newspaper Institute of America

FREE FOR ASTHMA

If you suffer with effects of Asthma and choke and gasp for breath, if restful sleep is difficult because of the struggle to breathe, don't fail to send at once to the Frontier Asthma Company for a FREE trial of the FRONTIER ASTHMA MEDICINE, a preparation for temporary symptomatic relief of paroxysms of Bronchial Asthma. No matter where you live or whether you have faith in any medicine under the sun, send today for this free trial. It will cost you nothing.

FRONTIER ASTHMA CO. 152-A FRONTIER Bldg.
442 NIAGARA ST. BUFFALO 1, N. Y.

**MEN
PAST
40**

Men afflicted with Bladder Trouble, Getting Up Nights, Pains in Back, Hips, Legs, Nervousness, Dizziness, Physical Inability and General Impotency send for our amazing FREE BOOK that

tells how you may correct these conditions and have new health and Zest in Life. Write today. No Obligation.

Excelsior Institute, Dept. 9301, Excelsior Springs, Mo.

"FEMMES in FURS" PIN-UP PIC'S

Unusual photo reproductions of original drawings of Women in Furs. Size 5x8" 4 for \$5. Remit cash, stamps or m.o.

GARGOYLE, Dept. DA

Box 478, Mad. Sq. Sta., N.Y. 10, N.Y.



HOW TO HYPNOTIZE IT'S EASY TO HYPNOTIZE...

when you know how!

Want the thrill of making someone do exactly what you order? Try hypnotism! This amazing technique gives full personal satisfaction. You'll find it entertaining and gratifying. HOW TO HYPNOTIZE shows all you need to know. It is put so simply, anyone can follow it. And there are 24 revealing photographs for your guidance. Includes complete directions for party and stage hypnotism.

SEND NO MONEY

Ten days' examination of this system is offered to you if you send the coupon today. We will ship you our copy by return mail, in plain wrapper. If not delighted with results, return it in 10 days and your money will be refunded. Stravon Publishers, Dept. H-532 45 West 51st St., New York 19, N. Y.

MAIL COUPON TODAY!

STRAVON PUBLISHERS, Dept. H-532

45 W. 51st St., N. Y. 21, N. Y.

Send HOW TO HYPNOTIZE in plain wrapper.

☐ Send C.O.D. I will pay postman \$1.95 plus postage.

☐ I enclose \$1.95. Send postpaid.

If not delighted, I may return it in 10 days and get my money back.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Zone _____

State _____

Canada & Foreign—\$2.50 with order

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

a few such as yours somehow seem so much more convincing. ...Well, I'll keep trying if you will!

TOO LONG, TOO LONG!

Dear Editor:

This is a first. The first letter I've written a science fiction magazine, and the first I've been so mad at any magazine in general!

First off, I like the letter section. I find it most enjoyable, and others must, too, because it's still with us. But!! And here goes: What was the point in Mr. Link's letter? To take up space? That it did admirably well—enough to have published a good short-short, or four or so other letters. Can't letters be cut shorter than that and still say what the writer intended to put across? Mr. Partridge had a rather long letter, too—but at least it was enjoyable reading, as were the rest you gave us. I should like to meet the Mr. Harold Miller referred to—not that I agree with his "Idea".

As to this issue, I found "The Eye in the Window" excellent, and in the short stories, Abernathy, Hensley, Winterbotham, and Slotkin in that order. Wiegand's "The Sedulous Apes" I disliked—not the idea, but the slang grammar. Strictly me, I'm sure.

I believe this is now long enough—so

[Turn To Page 98]

There is Still Time

to obtain this thrilling, complete book-length novel in our fully-illustrated pocket-sized edition!



CITY OF GLASS

by Noel Loomis

If your dealer is sold out, send 35¢ to COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS, Inc., 241 Church Street, New York 13, N. Y.

AUDELS HANDY BOOK OF PRACTICAL ELECTRICITY

• FOR MAINTENANCE ENGINEERS, ELECTRICIANS AND ALL ELECTRICAL WORKERS. PRICE \$4 •

**HERE IS
ELECTRICAL
INFORMATION
IN A
HANDY FORM**

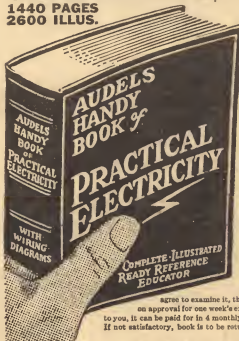
COVERING:

ELECTRICAL ENERGY
MECHANICAL ENERGY
Current Effects—Magnetism
MAGNETIC INDUCTION
D. C. Motors—Dynamoes
A. C. Motors—Alternators
ALTERNATOR
CONSTRUCTION
Armature Winding
Armature Repairing
WIRING DIAGRAMS
Reverse Current Relays
Overload Relays
Differential Power Relays
Undervoltage Relays
Temperature Relays
ELECTRIC POWER
TRANSMISSION
Underground Wiring
Cable Splicing
Switches—Electric Bells
TRANSFORMERS
HOUSE WIRING
Diagram of Connections
Rectifiers—Converters
Power Factors
WATT-HOUR METERS AND
CONNECTIONS
Watt-Hour Rules
Meters and Instruments
Circuit Breakers—Fuses
Rheostats and Starting Devices
STORAGE BATTERIES
Electrolysis—Insulators
Electric Lighting
FLUORESCENT
Sign Flashers
NEON SIGNS
Electro Plating
RADIO PRINCIPLES
RADIO QUESTIONS AND
ANSWERS
Radio Tubes—Photo Electric Cells
Electric Cranes
POWER WIRING
Substations—Power Station Plans
Plant Management
AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE
Automatic Telephone Switchboards
The Telegraph, Relay System and
Cable
ELEVATORS AND
CONTROLLERS
Elevator Wiring and Operating
Instructions
MARINE WIRING
Electric Ship Drive
ELECTRIC RAILWAYS
Electric Heating
AIR CONDITIONING
Motion Pictures
Domestic Refrigeration
Air Compressors
OIL BURNERS
Pumps—Wiring Calculations
Soldering—Bracing
WELDING
Electro-Therapeutics—X-Rays
Automobile Starting
Automobile Lighting Systems
Ignition
Electrically Operated Tools
Ready Reference Index

YOUR OPPORTUNITY!

"AUDELS HANDY BOOK OF PRACTICAL ELECTRICITY," endorsed by hundreds of experienced workers, you too can profit by the personal ownership of this good book, containing the practical information that every electrical man can use. Clear—concise—explaining the essential facts, figures and rules used in good general practice—and fully illustrated.

**1440 PAGES
2600 ILLUS.**



A Practical, Quick, Ready Reference. Gives complete instruction and inside information on electrical subjects. Every point clearly explained in plain language and with diagrams. Subjects arranged progressively for the student, and complete index makes information instantly available to professional workers for ready reference. A time and money saver. A competent and dependable guide and helping hand. Sooner or later this handy book will answer important questions and help you to handle efficiently all kinds of electrical problems.

"AUDELS HANDY BOOK OF PRACTICAL ELECTRICITY" is bringing a helping hand to hundreds of workers and if you will

agree to examine it, the book will be sent to you on approval for one week's examination. If found O.K. to you, it can be paid for in 4 monthly payments of \$1.00 each. If not satisfactory, book is to be returned in one week.

**\$4 COMPLETE
PAY \$1 A
ONLY 1 MO.**

**TO GET THIS ASSISTANCE FOR YOURSELF
SIMPLY FILL IN AND MAIL COUPON TODAY**

---ASK TO SEE IT!---

THEO. AUDEL & CO., 49 West 23rd St., New York
Mail AUDELS HANDY BOOK OF PRACTICAL
ELECTRICITY (Price \$4) on 7 Days' Free Trial. If O.K.
I will remit \$1 in 7 days and \$1 monthly until \$4 is paid.
Otherwise I will return it.

Name

Address

Occupation

Reference HAM



THEO. AUDEL & CO., 49 W. 23rd St., N. Y.

please, keep 'em interesting, and most of all, keep 'em short.

—MRS. KENNETH MILLER, Route 1,
Box 219A, Enumclaw, Washington

It's much the same with both stories and letters; you expect to find them all enjoyable, and sometimes you do. Other times, you'll find some you don't like, and sometimes you'll find some you dislike so much that you feel very angry. It's happened to me often enough in reading other magazines—magazines for which I have a lot of respect, and perhaps a little envy, too. But the point is, I think, you wouldn't have objected so much to the length of that letter had you found it interesting; all I can tell you is that some other readers did find it interesting. ...As you may have noted at the head of this department, I've asked for readers' preferences on the matter of length in letters. ...You're not the only one who probably didn't care for "Sedulous Apes" on the grounds of the slang. I must confess that I thought it very funny—but even had everyone liked it, I wouldn't consider another story written in that manner for a long time. Even for the readers who enjoy it, this manner of story-telling seems to have a low saturation-point.

SPREADING COMPREHENSION

Dear Editor:

Your "Limitations of Science Fiction" in the May SFQ was extremely interesting to

me. And it occurred to me that while science fiction may not add to our knowledge or understanding of human nature, it can certainly do a great deal of spreading of knowledge and understanding already known. And this spreading effect, I think, is where the true value of the genre can lie. I have found in my case, and in the cases of fan friends, that an attitude of objectivity is instilled by many stories, a perspective, which is the result of reading about past and future religions, wars, economics, social structures, etc. The readers of science fiction, after a healthy diet of the stuff, develop (or can develop, if the intelligence, etc., is there) a sort of ability to see through the falseness and sham of present-day culture. And they are likely to think of it as a present-day culture, too! Science fiction can have the effect of opening and broadening minds. There, I think, is the value.

Of course, many readers of science fiction read it because it appeals to their already-broad minds; and many like it because they are young, and naturally rebellious toward authority, and welcome stories of the future in which today's rules and laws are no longer valid or effective. But, still, there is the above-mentioned effect, and I think that is a good one.

—RICHARD GEIS, 1525 N. E. Ainsworth,
Portland 11, Oregon

Point well taken.

RWL

"OUT OF THIS WORLD" says Daily News

If you read the New York Daily News for August 11, 1954, you might have noticed a full page devoted to science fiction magazines. And among the titles whose covers were reproduced was our own FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION!

The new issue features complete novelets and short stories by

IRVING COX, Jr. • L. SPRAGUE de CAMP
THEODORE L. THOMAS • EANDO BINDER
and many others

Look for the
new pocket-size

FUTURE

SCIENCE FICTION



MYSTERY! MAGIC! SCIENCE! FUN!

To Amuse and Amaze Your Friends



A necessary tool for the amateur magician and a good joke too. Plastic, 14 inches long with white tips and a black center. 5 exciting tricks—Rises, jumps, produces silk, etc. No. 240.....**1.50**



Boomerang

Here's something new in target throwing. In case you miss, it comes right back to you, and bingo! you're all set to "fire" again. More fun than a "barrel of monkeys" No. 141.....**50¢**



Ventro & Book

Your chance to be a ventriloquist. Throw your voice into trunks, behind doors, and everywhere. Instrument fits in your mouth and out of sight. You'll fool the teacher, your friends, and your family and have fun doing it. Free book on "How to Become a Ventriloquist" No. 137.....**25¢**



RADIO MIKE

Talk, Sing, Play thru your radio

Sing, laugh, talk, crack jokes from an other room and your voice will be reproduced thru the radio! Fool everybody into thinking it's coming right out of the radio. Easily attached to most standard radios. Made of handsome enameled metal 4 inches high. No. 112.....**1.98**

TRICK BASEBALL

It bounces cockeyed, it curves, it dips, it's impossible to catch. It's sure to set all the kids on the block spinning after it. There's a barrel of fun in every bounce of this amazing baseball. No. 158.....**50¢**



Your chance to have eyes in back of your head. See behind or alongside and no one knows you are watching. Fun everywhere you go. No. 146.....**35¢**

LOOK-BACK SCOPE



TALKING TEETH

They move! They talk! They're weird! Guaranteed to shut the blabbermouths up for good. It'll really embarrass them. It's a set of big false teeth that when wound up, start to chatter away, like crazy. A great comic effect for false teeth on cold nights. No. 513.....**1.25**



WHOOPEE CUSHION

Place it on a chair under a cushion, then watch the fun when someone sits down! It gives forth embarrassing noises. Made of rubber, and inflatable. A scream at parties and gatherings. No. 247.....**50¢**



POWERFUL MANY EXCLUSIVE ITEMS AVAILABLE

COMPACT ONE TUBE RADIO

Pocket Size... Brings in stations up to 1000 miles away

Modern electronics makes this wonderful set possible. So small it will fit in a pocket. Everything is supplied for you. Easy to assemble in a few minutes with just a screw driver. No soldering required. Really powerful too. Announcements of stations up to 1000 miles away come in so loud and clear you'd think they were right near home. Learn many useful and important things about radio. No. 205.....**3.98**



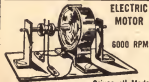
BLACK EYE JOKE

Show them the "naughty" pictures inside. They'll twist it and turn it to see, but all they do is blacken their eyes. No. 218.....**25¢**



Costume Set Designed for Every Boy

Style 160 — For you he-men, we've got the newest, most exciting and tremendous play suit of its time. A complete Superman outfit in fine durable washable rayon gabardine. Outfit includes red cape with screened Superman figure, navy and red suit with gilt figure "S", and belt. Be first to get this wonderful outfit. Sizes 4-14.....**6.98**



ELECTRIC MOTOR

6000 RPM

—Drives all Models

This is an offer that sounds unbelievable but it is being made just the same. Yes, you can have an actual electric motor for just 50¢. This compact little kit makes it a cinch to build this high-power motor. And the fun you are going to get from using it. It's so simple, and your motor is ready to turn out 6000 rpm's of power to work for you. The coils of this remarkable tool actually turn at the rate of 1500 feet per minute. No. 052.....**Only 50¢**



JOY BUZZER

The most popular joke novelty in years! Wind up and wear it like a ring. When you shake hands, it almost raises the victim off his feet with a "shocking sensation". Absolutely harmless. No. 239.....**Only 50¢**

10 DAY TRIAL FREE

HONOR HOUSE PRODUCTS CORP., Lynbrook, N. Y. Dept. 77

Cannot ship orders totalling less than \$1.00 O.D.

Rush me the items listed below. If I am not satisfied I may return any part of my purchase after 10 days free trial for full refund at the purchase price.

ITEM #	NAME OF ITEM	HOW MANY	TOTAL PRICE

☐ I enclose in full payment. The Honor House Products Corp. will pay postage.
☐ Send C.O.D. I will pay postman on delivery plus a few cents postage.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

CARBURETOR

OIL FILTER

UNIVERSALS

WHEELS

GENERATOR

CLUTCH

DISTRIBUTOR

SHOCK ASSEMBLIES

AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION

BRAKES

REAR END

VALVES

STARTER

IGNITION

FUEL PUMP

COOLING SYSTEM

DIFFERENTIAL

VOLTAGE REGULATOR

OVERDRIVE

AUTOMATIC TOP

TURN SIGNALS

Name Any Part of Any Car-- You Can Fix It-Quickly, Easily

**Just look up the job in
MOTOR'S BRAND-NEW AUTO REPAIR MANUAL**
2900 Pictures—225,000 Repair Facts—Easy Step-by-Step Instructions

COVERS EVERY CAR BUILT FROM 1940 THRU 1955

YES, now you can fix ANY part of ANY car—quickly, easily, and right! From carburetor adjustment to a complete overhaul, it's easy when you have MOTOR's famous Auto Repair Manual. It's like having a staff of factory experts and MOTOR's field-trained engineers beside you, guiding you every step of the way. No wonder so many thousands of beginner and expert mechanics alike use this step-by-step, illustrated giant manual.

MOTOR's Manual "starts from scratch"—leads you through entire job with easy step-by-step directions, clear "how-to" pictures. Tells you WHERE to start, what TOOLS to use. You just CAN'T go wrong!

**2,900 Pictures! So Complete
So Simple, You CAN'T Go Wrong!**

NEW, REVISED edition covers everything you need to know to repair any car. Over **ONE THOUSAND** giant pages, 2900 "This-Is-How" pictures lead you every step of the way. 291 "Quick-Check" charts—23,436 essential repair specifications. Over 225,000 service and repair facts on ALL 737 chassis

models from 1940 thru 1955. Instructions and pictures so clear you can't go wrong! Even a green beginner mechanic can do a good job. And if you're a top-notch mechanic, you'll be amazed by the time and labor-saving methods!

**The "Meat" of
Over 160 Official
Shop Manuals**

The editors have put together the "know-how" from over 160 Official Shop Manuals and "boiled it down" into one fully-illustrated easy-to-understand guide.

Here's **ILLUSTRATED** step-by-step guidance on Automatic Transmissions, Tune Up, Ignition, Carburetors, Fuel Pumps, Clutches, Steering Gears, Rear End, Brakes, **PLUS MUCH, MUCH MORE.**

**SEND NO MONEY
Try Book for a Week FREE**

Send no money. Pay nothing to postman. Test book in your own garage or shop. It's **GUARANTEED** to pay for itself in 7 days. If it doesn't, just return the book, and owe nothing. **MOTOR Book Dept., Desk 4711, 250 W. 55th St., New York 19, N. Y.**

**Same FREE Offer on MOTOR'S New
TRUCK AND TRACTOR MANUAL**



Covers **EVERY** job on **EVERY** popular make truck or farm tractor, including GM and Cummins Models 1946 thru 1954. For **FREE** trial, check coupon.

**Covers 737 Models—
All These Makes**

Buick	Hudson
Cadillac	Kaiser
Chevrolet	Lincoln
Chrysler	Mercury
Crosley	Nash
De Soto	Oldsmobile
Dodge	Packard
Ford	Plymouth
Fraser	Pontiac
Henry J	Studebaker
	Willys

**USED BY U.S.
ARMED FORCES**

**FREE
7-DAY TRIAL**
RETURN AND PAY NOTHING
IF NOT SATISFIED

MAIL COUPON NOW FOR 7-DAY FREE TRIAL

MOTOR BOOK DEPT.
Desk 4711, 250 W. 55th St., N. Y. 19, N. Y.
Rush me at once (check box opposite book you want!)

☐ **MOTOR'S New AUTO REPAIR MANUAL.** If O.K., I will remit \$2 in 7 days, \$2 monthly for 2 months and a final payment of \$5 (plus 35¢ delivery charges) one month after that. Otherwise I will return the book postpaid in 7 days. (Foreign price, remit \$9 cash with order.)

☐ **MOTOR'S New TRUCK & TRACTOR REPAIR MANUAL.** If O.K., I will remit \$2 in 7 days, and \$2 monthly for 2 months, plus 35¢ delivery charges with final payment. Otherwise I will return book postpaid in 7 days. (Foreign price, remit \$10 cash with order.)

Print Name..... Age.....

Address

City..... State.....

☐ Check box and save 34¢ shipping charges by enclosing WITH coupon entire payment of \$4.56 for Auto Repair Manual (or \$5 for Truck and Tractor Repair Manual.) Same 7-day return-refund privilege applies.

Amazed Self and Friends—"It amazed myself and my friends. Now, how do jobs that stumped me before!"—Michael Bulcicky, Newark, N. J.



So Complete and Easy to Understand—"So complete, easy to understand"—have done jobs with Manual I would not have attempted without it!"—C. E. Vancuren, Mich.

Other Mechanic Worked Half A Day—"He Does Job In Half An Hour—"I fixed a motor in 30 minutes after another mechanic had worked on it half a day!"—C. Ashberry, Westmoreland, Pa.



2,000,000 COPIES SOLD!